LIFE

OF

WILLIAM CAPERS, D.D.,

ONE OF THE BISHOPS OF

THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, SOUTH;

INCLUDING AN

Autobiography.

BY

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Preface.

THE writer of the following memoir deems it proper to state that shortly after the death of his honored and lamented friend, the Rev. Bishop Capers, an application was made to him by the family of the deceased to undertake the preparation of a biography. This application, although it furnished a touching proof of personal attachment and regard, he was at the time constrained to decline, under the conviction that the pressure of engagements in a new and important field of labor would not allow him the time and leisure demanded by such an undertaking. The lapse of a couple of years having supplied no biographer, he yielded to a renewed application, and consented to make the attempt. He was encouraged by the consideration that his venerable friend had left a minute account of the early years of his active and varied life, bringing the narrative nearly to the point of time at which the writer was favored to form a personal

acquaintance with him, to enjoy his friendship, and to possess many opportunities, in the intimacy of daily intercourse, to study the developments of his mind and character. His aim has been to draw the portrait of his friend just as the vivid recollections of thirty years presented him to the mental vision; aiming at simple exactness and fidelity to truth in the picture. The lessons taught by the life of this eminent, useful, and beloved minister of Christ are of great value to the Church, and should not be lost or forgotten. May this volume, which presents the *memorabilia* of that life, be the means of perpetuating in the world not only the impression of its excellences, but the living spirit of grace in Christ Jesus, which was the source of all its sanctity and usefulness.

WOFFORD COLLEGE, S. C.

LIFE OF WILLIAM CAPERS, D.D.

Recollections of Myself

IN MY PAST LIFE.

I WAS born January 26, 1790, at my father's winter residence, (his plantation,) on Bull-Head Swamp, in the Parish of St. Thomas, South Carolina, some twenty miles from Charleston: a place which at the present time might be accounted no place; though it was then valuable, and had served to make my forefathers comfortable, and to keep them so for several generations. Indeed, it could have been no mean place at the time of my birth; for when, some four years afterwards, my father removed to Georgetown District, it was with the proceeds of the sale of this Bull-Head plantation, as I have heard him say, that he purchased a plantation on the island just by Georgetown, than which there are now no lands in the State more valuable. It is fair to say, however, that the change was then only beginning which transferred the culture of rice from the inland swamps, with their reservoirs of water, to the tide-lands; where only, for the last

half century, this grain has been produced for market.

Our name, Capers, I suppose to be derived from France, and the first of the name in South Carolina were Huguenots. Of this, however, I am not certain, nor is it of any consequence. I remember to have heard no more from my father about it than that he had never seen the name in any English catalogue of names. Those of the name in Beaufort District, South Carolina, who are descended from the same original stock with us, say that the name is French, and that our ancestor was of the Huguenots; and I dare say they are right.

My father's name was William; and that of his father and grandfather, Richard. Of my father's father, I know little more than that he died in middle life, leaving two sons, George Sinclair and William, and no daughter. After his death, his widow, my grandmother, having contracted an unhappy marriage, my father's uncle, Major Gabriel Capers, of Christ Church Parish, became his foster-father, and did nobly for him. He had five (or more) daughters, but no son, and my father became his son in all possible respects. My great-grandfather survived his son many years: a large healthy fat man of peculiar manners; dressing in osnaburgs and plains, (a kind of coarse woollen,) at home, and in broadcloth and silks, stiffened with excess of gold lace and a powdered wig, when he went abroad. A different kind of man was my father, whose name I cannot mention without emotion,

after thirty-eight years since I saw him buried. I have studied his character with intense interest, and honor his memory in every feature of it with my whole soul. A chivalrous soldier of the Revolution was he, whose ardent patriotism cooled not to the last of life; and yet, after a few years in the Legislature following the establishment of peace, he held no civil office whatever, and was seldom seen on public occasions, except in his office as Major of Brigade, to muster the troops. He was a military man—the war of the Revolution had made him so—and to muster a brigade seemed his highest recreation. But no one I ever knew was more a man of peace than my father was. Social and unselfish, generous, kind, and gentle, he loved not war. I dare say his nature was impulsive, but it was the opposite of passionate. Benevolence supplied his strongest incentives, and the serving of others seemed to be his favorite mode of serving himself. I never knew him to be involved in a personal difficulty but once; and then it was on account of a wrong done by an unreasonable neighbor to one of his negroes. His education had been interrupted by the Revolutionary war, and was therefore imperfect; but he had a clear and strong understanding, was fond of Natural Philosophy and Mechanics, wrote with ease and perspicuity, and in conversation was eminently engaging. He was born October 13, 1758; just at the right time, he was fond to say, that he might have a full share in the war of his country's independence.

And yet, with the Butlers, of South Carolina, (sons of a worthy sire who did his country good service,) I have to complain that my father's name does not appear in any history of the American Revolution. There is, indeed, a small volume, by the late Chancellor James, in which his name is mentioned, and we are told of his giving several thousand dollars* (I think it was) for a blanket, and several hundred for a penknife; and some passing compliment is paid to his courage and devotion to the country; and besides this I have seen nothing more. And yet I am bound to claim for him that he fought with the bravest and best, first as a lieutenant in the second regiment, when General Moultrie was Colonel, Marion Lieutenant-Colonel, and Horry a Captain; and afterwards, till the close of the war, as one of General Marion's captains, and his intimate friend.

He was one of the defenders of Charleston in the battle of Fort Sullivan, (Fort Moultrie;) was in the battle of Eutaw; was at the siege of Savannah, where Pulaski fell, and not far from him at that fatal moment; and was at the battle of Rugely's Mills, which happened after his escape from imprisonment in Charleston, and before he had rejoined Marion. Indeed, he was there in search of Marion, whom he expected to find with General Gates, but found not, as he had gone on an expedition to Fort

* Such was the depreciation of what was called "Continental money."

Motte. At Stono, where the lamented Laurens fell, he was present and fought like himself; at the siege of Charleston he was one of its defenders, and one of those who accompanied Major Huger on the service, which on their return proved fatal to that gallant officer, by a false alarm, through the inadvertence of a sentinel, whereby many lost their lives by the fire of their own countrymen from their own lines of defence; besides numerous skirmishes which have never found a record in the books, though they contributed no mean quota to the defence of the country.

The silence of the books to the contrary notwithstanding, I might adduce something like proof of Marion's friendship for him, from a conversation with Mrs. Marion herself, the General's widow, in the winter of 1806–7, when in obedience to my father's commands I called at her house, on my way to Charleston, to make his respects and inquire after her health. I might tell how the announcement of my name to the servant in waiting brought her venerable person to the door; how eagerly she asked if I was the son of her valued friend; how she seized my hand in both of hers with a hearty shake, and "God bless your father!" and how late it was that night before I was dismissed to bed from tales of my father's chivalry and noble heart. And many a time in the course of my earlier life was I honored on my father's account; and never have I met with officer or soldier of Marion's command who was not my friend for my father's sake

But with respect to his connection with the second regiment, early in the war. If I mistake not, there were two regiments (possibly more) raised by the State of South Carolina at the beginning of the war, for the general cause of the Revolution, and not for service within the State only; and for this reason they were called *Continental* regiments. This one of them, as I have just said, was commanded at first by Moultrie, with Marion and Horry for Lieutenant-Colonel and Major. And it was while these officers commanded, that my father, though not of age, held a commission in it. In proof of this, besides having heard it affirmed repeatedly by both my father and uncle, I happen to have in my possession a note from General Horry to my father in the year 1802, which I deem conclusive. The occasion of the note seems to have been some difference of opinion on a point of tactics between my father, then Brigade Major, and his General of Brigade, Conway, which had been referred to General Horry; who, after giving his opinion, concludes the note with these express words: "*If my memory do not fail me, I think such was the usage, or custom, in the second regiment, to which we both belonged in June of our Continental war.*" Here, then, is explicit testimony from the best possible authority, as to the fact that he belonged to the second regiment; in what capacity is not stated, but it must have been as an officer, for it would have been ridiculous in the General to make such an allusion with respect to a private, and we

claim for him no higher rank in that regiment than that of Lieutenant. But the General's note serves me for another point. It appears that he and my father both belonged to the second regiment, "*in June of our Continental war.*" What June must that have been? The phraseology is peculiar, and can make sense only on the supposition that there was one June unmistakably distinguished from the rest, for there were several Junes during "our Continental war." It could have been no other than June, 1776, distinguished above all others of the Revolution, especially to officers of the second regiment, by the battle of Fort Moultrie. There was no June for the second regiment before that, for it had not been organized and in service, and that was its first great achievement. Nor could there have been any June after it of which General Horry might say that he and my father did then belong to the second regiment; for shortly after the battle of Fort Moultrie, Marion becoming a partisan General, both Horry and my father left that regiment and joined him—one as colonel and the other as captain.

I have been thus particular because of that mortifying silence of the books; and because I have even seen a printed list purporting to give the names of all the persons who were engaged in the battle of Fort Moultrie, from which my father's name was omitted. This surprises me more than any thing else, for as to the period of his service as one of Marion's captains, the peculiar mode of war-

fare adopted by the General made it extremely difficult to gather information of numerous important actions, whilst his army was so often to be found in detachments only, here and there, from the Combahee to the Pee-Dee river. Indeed, I believe that after the fall of Charleston there was a considerable period of time in which it was seldom embodied in any great force. And yet there was always a galling impracticable foe, hard to be found, and still harder to be got rid of, by British or Tory. It was some one of Marion's captains, trained and qualified by that great commander to play the General on a smaller scale. Much of such service fell to my father's share, and many a thrilling incident of his scouting-parties have I heard related by him, which I would like to give, but that, at this distance of time, they are not distinct enough in detail to my recollection to be narrated with accuracy. They appear indistinctly, or, rather, confusedly, so that I cannot be sure that I have all the parts of any event in order, or that parts of one do not belong to another. But I can state with certainty the facts respecting his being once taken prisoner by the Tories; and of his escape from the prison in Charleston not many weeks afterwards. These are not the incidents I would choose to select, if my memory served me as well for the rest; nevertheless, you may think them worth preserving; or, if not, blot them out.

My uncle and father were on furlough for a short time, and had reached my uncle's residence,

while the Tories were in force in the neighborhood. My uncle's wife was at the point of death, and he would not leave her for the night, notwithstanding the imminent danger of remaining in the house with the Tories so near him. My father would not leave his brother alone in so much danger. They barricaded the house as well as they could, and awaited the issue. As they had feared, the Tories were upon them before it was light — a full company surrounding the house. Flight was impossible; they must be taken; and they would make terms; but how? They affected to be a company themselves, muttering a mimicry of many voices, moving rapidly about, and by every artifice in their power seeming to be a house-full, and not two persons only. The stratagem succeeded, and the craven foe formally demanded a surrender. They were not quick to answer the demand, but kept up their bustling with all their might. The demand to surrender was repeated; and in answer to it they inquired how many of the assailants there were. A parley ensued, and they finally surrendered on condition that, on sacred honor, the men should be treated as prisoners of war, and the house should not be molested. This being done with due formality, they marched out, two men of them, to the extreme mortification of the valiant Tory and his command. They were taken to Charleston, delivered to the Commandant, Colonel Balfour, and put in prison. Their apartment was in the third story of the jail, with some

eight or ten other prisoners. It happened that among the gentlemen of the city and surrounding country, who had taken the protection offered by the British after the fall of Charleston, (and of which they afterwards had so much cause to complain,) there was a Mr. Fogartie, an acquaintance of my father and uncle, and of others of the prisoners, who visited them almost daily, and procured them many comforts. And after some weeks of their imprisonment had passed, this gentleman, who was ever kindly interested for them, brought the appalling tidings of its having been determined to convey them away from the city to the West Indies. He had overheard an order to the effect that a vessel should be got ready for this purpose forthwith, and should sail by the next fair wind. Nothing could have been more abhorrent to them than this information. Their very souls were sick of the accounts they had heard of the prison-ships in that quarter to which they were to be sent—their crowded condition, want of food, excessive heat, stench, and vermin, worse than death. What possible attempt might enable if but half of them to escape at the sacrifice of the rest? And it was presently concluded that Mr. Fogartie should procure a boat and hands to be in readiness at the market wharf that evening, and, if possible, arms and ammunition for their use; and that they would seize the moment when the turnkey came at dusk to see that all was well, to rush forth together, and seizing the arms of the sentry at their door, pre-

cipitate themselves on the next and the next along the stairs, killing or being killed, till they had made their way to the street, and thence by flight to the boat. Could half of them hope to survive so desperate an attempt? Perhaps not, but death on the spot, rather than a West India prison-ship, was their unanimous voice.

This being their determination, the faithful Fogartie left them, to arrange for his part in the plot—the procurement of arms and a boat at the water-side. There were not many hours for reflection before the fearful point of time when liberation or the bayonet had been fixed on; and it is not surprising that with the chances so terribly against them, one and another, as the evening came on, showed symptoms of a love of life. The first for the plot were the first to abandon it. For several hours the majority stood firm; but the minority could not be reclaimed, but finally overcame the majority, who concluded that the chances for escape must be diminished by as much as their number was reduced, and the plot had better be abandoned. Not so with my father, whose resolution had been taken too firmly to be reconsidered. His last hope was in his brother; who, though he would gladly have been one with the rest in the plot, deemed it mad for two only to attempt to escape by such means, and strove earnestly to dissuade him from his avowed purpose of going by himself alone if no one would go with him. The remonstrances of the rest he answered indifferently, or with a gibe,

but his brother's importunities cost him some trouble; till almost at the point of the time he turned sharply on him, and said, "Brother, I never thought myself a braver man than you. Now I know it. Make me not a coward." But the time was come. The steps of the turnkey were heard at the door. It was dusk, and was growing dark on the stairs. If the turnkey could be deceived, might not the desperate man escape? They had in the room a great bowl out of which they drank their punch; and there was a little punch at the bottom of the bowl. This my uncle took, and placing himself next to the door, was ready, the moment it should be opened, to offer it to the willing turnkey. It was done. The great bowl hid every thing from him except the punch in the bottom of it, and my father instantly was gone. I learned from my uncle that it was not difficult to engage the attention of the turnkey, who loved punch dearly, long enough to afford my father ample time for his escape. But that escape. Whether in the dusk the sentry at the head of the stairs took him for a visitor, or for the turnkey himself, my father knew not; but they had no dream of his being a prisoner making his escape, and so suffered him to pass without molestation. Just passed them, and having begun to descend the stairs, his foot slipped, and he tumbled down the whole flight of steps to the platform at their turning, where the next sentry was posted. A laugh and sneer from the sentinel, who probably took him to be drunk, was

all that came of it. This furnished a hint which he improved; and after the same seemingly drunken manner he descended to the lower floor, and made his way out of the house. His friend was waiting at the appointed place, but had failed of procuring a boat, on account of extreme bad weather. Not a moment could be lost; but taking a pistol and a hasty adieu, he was in a trice at the Fish-Market landing. There, luckily, he found a negro fisherman bailing a boat; and leaping into it and presenting his pistol, he ordered him to his paddle and off for Haddrell's Point. The affrighted fisherman promptly obeyed, only exclaiming that they must be lost: the boat could not possibly live in such a storm. He paddled stoutly—as they well know how to do—and my father found it necessary to betake himself, for his part, to bailing the boat of the water which dashed in over her bows. But there was another danger impending which he dreaded even more than the agitated waters. The British galleys were lying in the stream, and it was impossible to escape their watchfulness. They must see him, would hail him, and what should he do? The best expedient he could think of, and probably the only one which could have availed him, was suggested by the lucky mistake of the sentry on the staircase, taking him to be drunk; and so he summoned his utmost powers to act the part of a drunken sailor. Long before the expected hail of "What boat's that?" he began singing and huzzaing lustily, now a stanza of some vulgar

song, then "God save great George our king;" mingling it to suit, and interlarding it with all sorts of drunken rhapsody. He was hailed, and returned it by giving himself some common name, claiming to belong to one of the galleys, and stoutly protesting he was too drunk and the water too rough; huzzaing for the king, for the commandant, and almost any British officer whose name he knew; professing to be as brave and true as any of them, but that he had got drunk among the "gals" on shore, and would not come to. Of course, then, he had to pass. He was not worth shooting at, and the next day would bring him to condign punishment. And now the jail, the storm, the galleys, all were passed in safety; and landing at Haddrell's Point, and giving a guinea to the negro whose boat and paddle had been so serviceable to him, he was once more one of Marion's men.

But my honored father was a Christian. It was on the first introduction of the Methodist ministry into South Carolina that, under the preaching of Henry Willis, of blessed memory, in the year 1786, he was awakened and converted, and became a soldier of the Prince of Peace. His name, and that of my maternal grandfather, John Singeltary, may be seen in the original conveyances for the first two Methodist churches built in Charleston, (Cumberland Street and Trinity,) of which they were trustees. After his removal to Georgetown, in 1794, he became a strong pillar of the infant church in that place, serving as trustee, steward, and

leader. A later removal to Waccamaw Neck proved unfavorable to his spirituality, and it was not till 1808, in Sumter District, that he recovered all that he had lost of the life of faith. Thenceforward till his final removal to the life above, December 12, 1812, he was a pattern of piety, an example of pure and undefiled religion, such as for consistency, simplicity, and power I have never known excelled. His death was surpassingly triumphant. I witnessed it, and was with him day and night for several months whilst he was passing down into the valley of Jordan. All was peace, and power, and exultant hope. There was no moment of darkness in his final sickness, no thorn in the pillow of his repose, no distrust of the Saviour, no lack of confidence in God, but gloriously the reverse. His light was that of the perfect day, his peace was as a river, he believed with all his heart, and at the time of his extremest pain he would say, with Job, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in Him."

My mother was Mary, daughter of John and Sarah Singeltary, of Cain Hoy, in the same Parish of St. Thomas, aforesaid: another place of the olden time, when South Carolina was peopled mainly in the low country, and Wando river, of whose banks Cain Hoy was the most notable place, shared with Ashley river, Cooper river, and Goose creek, in a high reputation for society, hospitality, and all that; times gone by with the generations whose very tombs are now in ruins. But by one

conversant with those times, (the late Captain Hibben, of Haddrell's Point,) I have heard my grandfather spoken of as "the patriarch of Cain Hoy." And such I dare say he was, albeit a recent visitor might entertain some doubt whether the place had ever produced a man. But truly there used to be men, who were men every inch of them, not only on Wando river, but along creeks and swamps not a few, where now a ruined canal, and heaps of crumbling bricks, and clumps or rows of ornamental trees, tell mournfully of death and a blight upon the land.

I have always felt it a pain that I never knew my mother. She died when I was barely over two years old. Often and eagerly have I inquired about her: her person, her spirit, her piety, her general bearing; any thing that might help to raise an image of her in my mind. In this way I have learned that she was rather below the medium height of women, delicately formed, of fair complexion and light hair, with soft laughing blue eyes, gentle but sprightly, affectionate and confiding, a favorite with her friends, and my father's idol; and that her sweet spirit was ennobled by a true Christian faith and purity of heart. I am in possession of a letter from my father to my aunt, the late Mrs. Bennett, of Haddrell's Point, in which are related incidents of her final hours thrilling to contemplate. She died when young, and rich in blessings precious to the heart; but she was more than ready to obey the summons, "to be absent

from the body and present with the Lord." Her last moments, radiant with the light of heaven before her, were mostly taken up with soothing exhortations to her husband, and prayers and blessings for her children. These were four: Sarah, my beloved sister, who was the eldest, Gabriel the second, myself the third, and John Singeltary, (whose birth occasioned her death,) the fourth. She had had a second daughter, Mary Singeltary, who died some time before her.

My second mother, whose name also was Mary, was a daughter of Samuel Wragg, Esq., of Georgetown; the same who was the original proprietor of that part of Charleston called Wraggsboro'; and after whose daughters, Judith, Elizabeth, Ann, Charlotte, Mary, and Henrietta, the streets bearing those names were called. He had also two sons, John and Samuel. My aunts (for my aunts they were) Judith and Elizabeth lived to old age, maiden ladies of uncommon understanding, (particularly Judith,) and distinguished to a high degree for ardent piety and active benevolence. They were Christian ladies, and Methodists of the very first model. Ann married a wealthy gentleman of the name of Ferguson, and lived in Charleston, with their estate on Cooper river. They were Episcopalians; and she was for many years First Lady Commissioner of the Orphan House, which noble institution was much indebted to her, and has becomingly acknowledged it. Charlotte must have died when young, as I have no recollection of

her. Henrietta, the youngest of the daughters, married Erasmus Rothmahler, Esq., of an old and honorable family, and a lawyer of high respects, but (unfortunately) an eccentric man. Of all my near friends in childhood and youth, after my father and mother, I loved my Aunt Henrietta best; and to this day I remember her with strong affection, and I might say admiration, as a pattern of all social excellence. And she too was a thorough Methodist.

In what follows I will be understood always to mean my father's second wife, my second mother, by the appellative mother. I knew no other mother, and I should offend the heart that throbs in my bosom were I to call her *stepmother*. She was my mother, and in heaven, in the presence of the sainted one who bore me, I will call her mother. Pity on those poor children who, by their father's marriage, have stepmothers only. My early recollections mingle sweet images of my mother's love and sympathy with all that concerned me. I was liable to attacks of croup on any exposure to damp weather; and so on rainy days I became her housekeeper, carrying a bunch of keys at my side, giving from the pantry breakfast, dinner, and supper, with free use of the barrel of sugar and molasses-candy for my pains—the indulgence, by the way, being itself remedial. By a thousand arts of kind endearment she attached me to her so closely, that I scarcely felt it a privation to be shut up with her in the house, while my brothers were pursuing their

sports in the fields. Those days were invaluable to me. Converse with my mother was communion with my guardian angel, while my good sister's blithesome spirit (for she was always by) contributed no little to my happiness.

My father's second marriage was in 1793, and shortly afterwards he disposed of his estate in St. Thomas's Parish, purchased a plantation on the island between Waccamaw and Black rivers, and removed his residence to Georgetown. While his winter residence had been on Bull Head, in St. Thomas's, he passed his summers at a place which he called Capernaum, on the seashore, nearly opposite Capers's Island, in Christ Church Parish. He now desired to find such a seashore place on Waccamaw Neck; and as he did not like to live in town, and his island plantation was a deep mud-swamp, unsuitable for his residence, he was inclined to locate himself permanently on the Waccamaw seashore. A summer or two were passed at a rented place called La Bruce's, while for the winter and spring he resided in town; and then he purchased a place some twenty miles from Georgetown, which he called Belle Vue, and at which we lived during the years 1796, '97, and '98. It was beautifully open to the ocean, having the prospect pleasantly dotted with clumps of trees in the marshes, (called hammocks,) and points of uncleared woods on the main land. My recollections go back to the year 1795, at La Bruce's seashore, where I killed a glass snake, the image of which is still fresh to my mind; and how,

as I broke it to pieces with a small stick, the pieces, when broken square off, wormed themselves about as if alive. There, too, I myself had like to have been killed by a vicious horse; and there we had the sport of smoking off the sand-flies. Do not laugh. Prince Albert's boys never had a merrier play. But Belle Vue was my childhood's darling home. Here were those spacious old fields, overgrown with dog-fennel, which my brother John and myself used to course with such exquisite glee, mounted on cornstalk horses, with bows and arrows, when the dog-fennel served for woods, and a cock-sparrow might be an old buck. Here stood by the side of a purling branch, that grove of tall trees where we found the grape-vine, by which we used to swing so pleasantly. Here we had our traps for catching birds, and caught them plentifully; and the damp days found me with my mother and sister and the little ones, all so happy. And here I got that masterly book for little boys, "Sandford and Merton;" which, in my mother's hand, proved invaluable to me. And, like Harry and Tommy, my brothers and I would build little houses wattled of clapboards and small poles, and exult in our fancied manliness and capacity for independence. But we were sure to have a stronger arm and better understanding than our own in all these achievements of ours; and without which it might have been more than doubtful whether, after all, we should have proved so competent to our undertakings. Bless my father! Blessed be God that

he was my father! What should Belle Vue, with all its play-places, have been without his superintendence, who seemed to enter into the spirit of our childish entertainments as if he had been a child himself, while still he never seemed below the stature of the noblest man?

But I must tell an anecdote or two of these early years which savor less of simple, amiable childhood. My father was exceeding fond of gardens, and had a large one; and we, his sons, fond of doing like him, must also have our gardens. A bed was appropriated to each one of us, (Gabriel, myself, and John,) which we subdivided into tiny beds, with narrow walks between, for the cultivation of just any thing we pleased. Radishes were our favorite vegetable. I had them in my garden full grown, while John's were but lately up. We were together in our gardens, which touched each other, and John wanted one of my radishes. Unluckily, I was out of humor, and refused him. Unused to this, for generally we were fond to serve each other, he heeded not my refusal, but plucked a radish. This was an invasion of my rights, which, in the mood I happened to be in, I would not permit; and so, instead of laughing at it, as at another time I might have done, I plucked a handful of his little ones in retaliation—reckoning the equivalent (if I reckoned at all) by bulk. This angered him, and he avenged himself by pulling up a quantity of mine, as if reckoning by number for his complement. A few minutes, and the radishes were

destroyed, both mine and his, and we were greatly enraged against each other. At that moment our father, who had been observing us from another part of the garden, interfered; and, as I was the older, addressed himself first to me. The fault, I insisted, was altogether John's, who had no right to pluck my radishes against my will. He (my father) would let no man serve him so; and had fought the British for no worse offence. But my logic could not answer. "I must whip you," said he; "and take your jacket off." "Whip *me*, sir, for *John's* fault?" "For your own fault, not John's." "I declare, Pa, 'tis all John's fault; and I'll pull off my shirt too, if you say so." "Off with it," was the brief rejoinder; and off it came, when a smart stroke of a switch across my naked shoulders, (the first I had ever felt,) brought me as by magic to my senses. It was the only stroke of punishment ever inflicted on me by that honored hand.

My recollection of incidents of this period of my childhood is vivid enough as to facts, but the order of them as to time I cannot so well remember. I date about a year later than the affair of the radishes the following story of the top. Both belong to Belle Vue, and must have happened between the years 1796 and 1799. My brothers and myself had each obtained a top, which neither of us could spin; and a thought seized me to practice by myself at spinning my top, which, as other boys could do it, I might learn, and by learning it sooner than my brothers, might win some wager of them; (for

each of us had something for his own of almost every kind of property on the place.) In a short time I had spun the top, and, elated with my success, ran eagerly to find my brothers, that I might make a bet. But they were abroad somewhere in the fields, and a wager must be ventured with my father, (if possibly he might be induced to make one,) or my betting must be postponed to another time. Too eager to allow of postponement, the venture was made in an off-hand manner on the spot. The stake was my heifer against his saddle-horse that I could spin my top. "Done," said my father, and I spun the top. Fantom was mine, and I capered about the room, and would have run to the stable to admire and caress him, but my father sternly stopped me. "Honor even among rogues," said he, "and if you turn gambler, you must do it as they say, honorably. You are not to leave off without giving me a chance to win my horse back." Another trial, and I lost the horse. Another, and another, and yet others; and bursting into tears I ran out of the room, having lost every thing I called my own except a favorite white pullet. For three days I bewailed my folly with all the bitterness of utter bankruptcy; while my brothers were unsparing of their gibes, and my father seemed coolly indifferent to it all. At last, finding me sitting moodily alone, he approached with his usual good-humor, and said he wanted to make a bargain with me. "A bargain, sir!" said I, "what have I to bargain with? You have got all I had from me

And if I had spoken all that I felt, I might have added, that he knew it was wrong to bet, and ought to have whipped me for offering him a wager, and not to have done as he had done. But he insisted that I was quite able to make the bargain he desired; and when he had constrained me to ask what it was, he told me that all he had won should be restored to me, and should be mine again just as it formerly was, if I would pledge myself never again to bet the value of a pin; and on the further condition, that if ever I did bet, I should forfeit to him whatever should be mine at the time of betting. Never was a proposition more eagerly embraced; and the final result of this strange incident was, that I became so thoroughly averse from betting as never afterwards to be induced to bet. Long after all fear of the forfeit originally pledged had passed from my mind, and until a better guaranty was furnished me in the grace of God, I not only hated betting so as never to lay a wager, but hated it to such a degree that I would break off from any company I chanced to be in, the moment it was proposed to play at any game for money.

But it is time for me to take leave of Belle Vue. When my father purchased it, he did so with an expectation of its proving healthy. It was inconveniently distant from his plantation, and we had so few neighbors that to get a school he was obliged to employ a teacher at his own expense. Nevertheless, for the sake of a pleasant and healthy residence, with the treasures of the sea at hand, these

inconveniences were not deemed considerable. But the fall of the year 1798 proved extremely sickly to us, and my precious little sister Judith died. On this account, mainly, Belle Vue was given up, and for the year 1799 we resided in Georgetown. Not that this change could have promised exemption from disease, but that in case of sickness we should there have medical aid. Belle Vue had proved sickly; Georgetown might not be more so; and the latter place brought my father near to his business, my mother near her sisters, and all of us near the physician. But we were not to suffer less by this removal; for the autumn of 1799 was more fatal to our family than the previous one had been. All of us were sick; another younger sister (Elizabeth) died; I myself escaped death as by miracle; and the fatal blow was struck which deprived my father of one of the best of wives, and me of my incomparable mother. The following winter my widowed father dismissed his overseer, and the plantation became our home. During the year 1800 I was daily put across the river in a small boat with my brothers, and went to Mr. Hamett's school in Georgetown. We dined with our good aunts, the Misses Wragg, and returned home in the evening as we had come in the morning, a servant always having the boat in readiness for us at the river-bank, in sight of town. My father seldom went to town, nor, indeed, anywhere else; and yet my young heart knew not that he was unhappy. The next spring (1801) I was sent, with my brother

Gabriel, to school on Pee-Dee, some thirty miles from Georgetown, where a Mr. Collins was the teacher; but, for some sufficient cause, he suddenly left his charge, and after a month or two we returned home.

This period, when the island rice-swamp was my home, introduced me to the use of a gun. It was before the Northern lakes had been much settled, on which bred so many myriads of ducks and wild geese; and these migrated to our low country rivers and rice-fields for the winters, in prodigious numbers. From my father's river-bank on the Waccamaw on one side, or the Black river on the other, innumerable flocks of them might at any time be seen; and better-flavored birds than several varieties of the ducks were, after they had grown fat on the waste rice, I know not. My father taught me the use of the gun with great care: how to handle it, to load it, to shoot with a true aim, and to keep it in good order; so that before I was twelve years old I believe I was as safe in the use of this dangerous implement as I have since been, and nearly or quite as good a marksman. I generally shot ducks in the river; observing from a distance at what particular points they were nearest to the land, and then creeping after them behind the river-bank, (that is, the embankment raised along the margin of the river for the purpose of keeping off the water at the flood-tide.) A well-trained dog kept close behind me, creeping when he saw me creep, or stopping at a motion of my hand, and instantly

on the firing of the gun springing into the water and fetching out the game. So abundant were they, and easy to be shot, that I would not fire at inferior kinds, but only at the large gray duck, the mallard or English duck, the bullneck, or the delicious little teal; which last was the least common, and was most esteemed, though not more than a third as large as the black or gray duck, or half as large as the mallard.

But farewell to the island and its game, after only one incident of imminent peril to me. It was some time in the summer of 1800 that, as we were sitting in the piazza overlooking the fields, we were startled at seeing the whole gang of negroes, men and women, running as for life towards the house. My father, my brother Gabriel and myself ran out to know the cause, and thought we heard the foremost ones crying out, "A deer, a deer!" My father took his gun in haste, thinking that a deer chased by hunters on the Waccamaw side of the river had swum across it, and was making for the uncleared swamp just in our rear, and that he would run probably on the western side of the settlement, where he might get a shot at him. On the eastern side was the barnyard, and mill for pounding rice; and to prevent his going that way, and to increase the chances for a shot on the other, he bade my brother and me to run in that direction with the dogs. Now, for the special security of the barnyard, there was a much higher embankment thrown up

around it than around other parts of the settlement, so that we could not see over it what might be running in the fields beyond. With the dogs, then, we made all speed to the barnyard, entered it, were running across it, and at the very point of rising on the farther bank, there met us on the top of it, and just opposite the point we had reached, a great bear. Petrified with horror, we could not, at first, move a peg. The dogs had better command of their legs, and, except Dash, (the dog that fetched the ducks,) they ran away at the top of their speed. O, that frightful bear! He growled, raised his bristles, champed with his teeth, bent his body like a bow, all before we could do any thing more than stare at him. But Dash delivered us. Quick as was the retreat of the rest, was his advance upon the frightful foe; and it seemed to be his bark that relaxed our nerves and enabled us to run. We had not so much as a stick in our hands. Dash seized the bear just by the tail, and obliged him to give him his attention. Bruin shook him off and made at us; but again Dash had him by the hinder parts. And thus it was between them several minutes, till my father, learning his mistake, came running, and the whole plantation with him, to the rescue. Negroes are famous for their noisiness when excited; but did ever the same number make such a noise as those then did, as entering the barnyard they saw the danger we were in? At any rate, they scared that bear no less than they gave us

courage, and he made away as fast as he could, and hid himself under the mill. He was made bacon of afterwards, and I ate some of it.

In September, 1801, my brother Gabriel and myself were sent to Dr. Roberts's academy, near Statesburg, in Sumter District, and were boarded with a Mrs. Jefferson. And this I reckon an important epoch in my life. Hitherto, whether in Georgetown, at Belle Vue, or at the island plantation, I had been accustomed to all the endearments of home, sweet home; a home where all my wants were anticipated, and not only every comfort was at hand, but the ministries of tender love were ever active for my happiness. The death of my mother was a sore affliction; but my sister (then just grown) became to me sister and mother both, and what was there lacking to me? Truly, nothing. But how different was it with me now, boarding a hundred miles away with Mrs. Jefferson. To what purpose had my heart been cultivated, when there was no one to sympathize with me, and whom I might love? That I slept on a mattress on the floor, with sheets of osnaburgs, and that my fare consisted of middling bacon and corn-bread, was a secondary matter. I felt a burden of want of another kind, though this also seemed severe. True, my brother Gabriel was with me, but where were my father, my sister, my brother John, and my younger brother and sisters, Samuel, Mary, and Henrietta? Could my one brother be all these to me? Of necessity I sought to be loved by my

hostess, and plied every art in my power to induce it, but to no purpose. Nor could I love her any more than I could make her love me. She did, indeed, once compliment me as the best of her boarders; but the very term *boarders*, in the cold, long-drawn utterance she gave it, told me that she did not love me. And then when she picked the thorn out of my foot with a coarse needle, she did it so roughly, never pitying me nor seeming to know that she was putting me to pain, though the blood trickled from the wound. The case was hopeless, and I was forced to retire within myself to supply as I might the want, the broad waste want of home. And yet she was a very good woman.

But every day was improving my bodily health and strength. And though I fed on little else than corn-bread, (for I could not brook the middling bacon,) I was far more active and growing faster than ever before. My boarding-house stood on the main road between Statesburg and Camden, just three miles from the former place, and touching the road. The academy was a mile and a half from it, on the summit of a hill; and this distance was my daily walk to and from school. The mid-day recess was passed at the schoolhouse, to which we carried our dinner of corn-bread and bacon in a large tin bucket. And for dinner, my usual practice was to throw away the bacon, and repair to a neighboring spring of cold pure water, with a pone of bread, and there substituting my hand or

a hickory leaf for a cup, make my meal, right frugally at least. At first I could not possibly make the walk to school without resting by the way; and even to ascend the hill on which the schoolhouse stood put me out of breath; but it was not long before I could even run the whole distance. The truth was, that up to this period I had been but a puny child; frequently sick, sometimes extremely ill; and but for this great change must probably have grown up, if at all, too delicate of constitution for laborious life. I am so fully of this persuasion, as to regard it providential that my father's business would not allow of his accompanying us on our way up, and we were committed to the care of a onesided friend of his to be entered at the academy and suitably boarded. Mr. Campbell could, but our father could not have subjected us to the extreme privations of such a boarding-house as ours, and the exposure of so long a walk in all kinds of weather: privations and exposures, nevertheless, for which I have long since known no regret, but, on the contrary, have felt thankful.

And here both nature and gratitude require me to introduce the name of my father's only brother, Captain George Sinclair Capers, my most kind and truly honored uncle. Some years previously to this time he had removed from St. James's, Santee, to Sumter District, and located himself in what was called Rembert's Settlement, some eight or nine miles from our academy; and our Saturdays

and Sundays were usually passed with him. His practice was to send horses for us every Friday evening, and send us back again on Monday morning. Nature, how true is nature! and a child's heart is nature's own. I could love nothing belonging to my boarding-house, and had no play-places there; no, not one; unless a wide-spreading oak should be called a play-place, to which I used to withdraw myself and sit among the boughs for hours together in moody reveries of home. But I loved the very horse that carried me to my uncle's door; and there every thing interested me. I was loved, and was so far happy.

About the close of the year 1801, my father exchanged his island plantation for one on Waccamaw river, adjoining the estate of John Tucker, Esq.; tired, I suppose, of living in a swamp, where his very dwelling-house had to be protected from the overflowing tides by embankments. Home was thus again transferred to Waccamaw, though it was not long to be continued so. The Christmas holidays of 1802, 1803, and 1804, were all I enjoyed of it; the first with boundless satisfaction; and the second and third only less so because of the absence of my sister, now married in Sumter District: if I might not also suppose that with less of innocency there is usually less of the pure zest of pleasure at fourteen than eleven.

I have gone over, thus hastily, that period of my life which of all others interests me most. Can it be peculiar to myself that at my time of life I

should delight greatly in recollections of my childhood; reënacting, as it were, the scenes and pastimes of the little boy—my own childhood's fond amusements—for the entertainment of my gray hairs? A few years ago I found a habit of indulging such fancies growing on me to such a degree that I thought it proper to restrain myself; and yet to some extent it may not prove amiss, but even wholesome. I love my childhood for its innocence, its harmless gayety, its simple gladsome pastimes, its gushing sympathies, its treasures of affection, its unsuspecting confidence, its joyousness, its happy world of home. I love it because it was artless and without guile or guilt, free from the curse and blight of carking care, uncorrupted, trustful, self-satisfied. In a word, I love it for its naturalness, and because I was happy in it. Blessings on the memory of my honored parents that it was so! And I say now, let the children be children. Let them have their plays in their own way, and choose them for themselves. We only spoil it by interfering. And I say more: away with all sickly sentimentalism, and the cruelty of unnatural constraint. What a deprivation it would have been to me at Belle Vue to have been refused my traps because it was cruel to catch the birds! But I had my traps, and never dreamed of any cruelty in the matter. My father made the first one for me, and taught me how to make them, and how to set them, and to choose proper places for them. But he never made a cage for me, nor did

I ever want him to make one. God had given me the birds to eat, if I could catch them; but not to shut them up in cages where they could do me no good. No artificial cases of conscience were made for me. I loved the birds. I loved to see their pretty feathers, and to hear them sing; but I loved to taste of their flesh still better. And I might do so as inoffensively as a cat, for any thing I was taught. The use gave the measure of right in the case. Such as I could not eat I would not catch. And I hate this day the mawkish philosophy which gives to the birds the sympathy due to the children. Let the children be free and active. Let them have a mind and will. And let them have a parent's gentle, faithful guidance: neither the ill-judging weakness which is ever teasing them with interjections that mean nothing; nor the false refinement which, while it must have the birds go free to carol in the groves, makes caged birds of the little children; nor the tyranny of constraining them out of all their simple gleeful nature to behave like old people.

My father married a third wife early in the year 1803, and began to spend his summers in the neighborhood of Bradford's Springs, in Sumter District. Some time before this, my boarding-house at school had been changed from the place before mentioned to that of my preceptor, hard by the academy. This was a decided improvement; for Mr. Roberts not only furnished better fare, but was himself a man for one to love and honor.

The summers of 1803, 1804, and 1805, were passed pleasantly enough, while the Saturdays and Sundays were spent at our new summer home, with delightful visits to my honored uncle and beloved sister, then Mrs. Guerry. A summer residence near Bradford's Springs was well enough; but my father was too active to be content at such a distance from his plantation, and without any positive employment to occupy his time. This change for the summer, therefore, led to a much more important one, which, as things turned out, proved highly detrimental on the score of property. In 1805 he was induced to sell his plantation on Waccamaw river, and purchase a cotton plantation on the Wateree, near Statesburg. He sold also his summer place the following year, and purchased a seat for permanent residence on the Hills, some five or six miles from the Wateree plantation, and just three and a half miles from Statesburg, on the road to Darlington. I do not remember the price, and cannot judge of its sufficiency, for the Waccamaw place; but the price given for the place purchased in its stead was certainly low enough. He gave for it six thousand dollars. And this must have been low; for when five years afterwards he judged it prudent to sell it, and remove to a less valuable place in the Black river portion of the District, it brought him eleven thousand dollars. And when the payment of the last instalment of this sum was refused, on the pretext that some particular portion of the land deemed better

than the rest had fallen short of the quantity supposed, Mr. McLauchlan, the next neighbor, and a responsible man, said on his oath in court that he believed it to be worth twenty thousand dollars. This was after the close of the war, and the price of cotton had risen very much; but eleven thousand dollars was the price stipulated during the war, when the price of cotton was at its lowest. And yet my father made a sad bargain in purchasing it for that much smaller sum of six thousand dollars, as this purchase involved the sale of his rice lands, and the transfer of his planting interest from rice to cotton, just at the point of time when the value of a rice crop was to be doubled, and that of a cotton crop reduced to almost nothing. Nevertheless, God's hand was in it for good. My mother's dying prayers had not yet been answered; nor might they have been on Waccamaw without a miracle. Her daughter was now a mother, and her sons were fast growing up without knowing her God in the light of her faith, or being concerned so to know Him.

I was continued with Dr. Roberts till December, 1805, when I was admitted into the South Carolina College. This Dr. John M. Roberts was a minister of the Baptist Church; a most estimable man and a good scholar, but an imperfect teacher. In Latin his text-books were Corderius, Erasmus, Cornelius Nepos, Cæsar, Sallust, Virgil, Cicero's Orations, and Horace's Odes and Art of Poetry. These I had read, and could translate

after a fashion, but had little knowledge of the analysis of what was translated. In recitation, our too easy instructor seemed to be more apprehensive of detecting the deficiency of his pupils, than we were of being exposed. His manner was that of one who might not expect us to know what we ought to have known; and asking us only questions as to points of obvious construction, he reserved to himself the parsing of all difficult passages. Of Greek, I had read the Gospel by St. John, and one or two of the Epistles, and perhaps a third part of Xenophon's Cyropedia. And with only this exceeding lame preparation, I was to enter the Sophomore class. It was little better than preposterous; and yet so did I rely on my teacher's judgment, and so did Dr. Maxcy, the President of the college, rely on it, or on his representations of me, that with no higher pretensions I actually was admitted Sophomore. Dr. Maxcy did indeed tell me that my examination had not been satisfactory, and did not justify my admission, and that he would prefer to have me enter college as Freshman. But I was out for Sophomore; and Sophomore it was, sadly to my cost. For to say nothing of geometry, and other studies, in which my classmates were ahead of me; and even overlooking my deficiency in Latin, of which I knew little more than barely to turn it into English, what possibly might I do with the Greek? Homer was the text-book, when I knew not much of the grammar of the language; and that little only as it was

required for St. John and Xenophon; and when I had not the remotest idea of the change of form wrought by the dialects in the language of Homer; and the class having read the book once, and some of them twice through, a hundred lines were given us for a lesson; and when, above all, I was so proud of heart as to be fully determined to hide if possible my ignorance, and ask instruction of no one. The very difficulties in my way were hidden from me, so that it sometimes cost me an hour's diligent search to find the indicative present of a single verb, changed, I knew not how, nor from what, by some unknown dialect. Pride is always folly, and in this instance it was madness. But I reasoned thus: Though I cannot get the present lesson, yet the getting of what I can will contribute something towards the next, and that towards the next, until I shall have got able to accomplish all that is required of me. But the madness of my folly was the obstinacy with which I exacted of myself, in such circumstances, the labor of plodding through my task, if at all, without assistance. This I would not have, because I could not get it without a betrayal of my ignorance. My whole time, and much more than my whole time, was therefore devoted to study; which I relaxed not for any fatigue from the hour of three o'clock in the morning to eleven at night—allowing myself but four hours in bed, and not a moment for any recreation. At three in the morning I sat down to Homer, Schrevelius, and the Greek gram-

mar, till prayers at six; after which came the dreaded recitation. My other studies employed me till five P M., bating only meals and recitations. At five o'clock prayers and supper interrupted me; and then till eleven, when I went to bed, I resumed the heartless task of Homer and his dialects. Twenty hours out of twenty-four spent in this manner soon worked mischief to my nerves. The little time I was in bed, I could not sleep for nightmare; I grew pale and tremulous, had incessant headache, and should probably have driven myself to death, but for an incident which brought my great and good friend, Dr. Maxcy, to my rescue. I told him all, and his noble nature seemed to yearn over me. I must desist from study; return home for the summer; (it was then May, 1806;) and returning in November, join the class which he at first recommended for me. I felt both the wisdom of his advice and the goodness which dictated it, and acted accordingly. But extreme was the mortification I experienced in having to abandon the achievement I had undertaken of equalling my superiors, and give up the struggle for a standing in the class of which Harper, Evans, Miller, Reed, and others like them, were members.

I purpose in these recollections to give you what I remember of myself faithfully, though some things, and especially at this period, may not now have my approval. It was early summer in 1806. I was at home; at the place called Woodland, lately purchased for a residence, on the Hills above

Statesburg. And interdicted close study, I was to recover strength and spirits by free exercise of any kind. And a scheme struck me for improving this time towards my advancement in future life. Sumter District then, as now, was divided into two election districts, Cleremont and Clarendon. Cleremont was mine: of which the population for the most part belonged to Salem and Black river, and were at that period averse from the people of the Hills, as being too aristocratic. At Bradford's Springs, I would have been on the stronger side, but our present residence put me in the minority portion of the district; and the scheme referred to was for the purpose of overcoming this disadvantage. For already I was looking with downright ambition (perhaps I should say vanity) to enter the Legislature as soon as I should be of age; and if I might accomplish this, I would deem it an equivalent for being retarded in my progress through college. My plan was this: There was a popular academy kept at that time on Black river by a brother of my late preceptor; and while I had reason to believe that I was favorably known to him, many of his larger pupils had become acquainted with me during my visits to my uncle, and attending church in that quarter. Now, then, I proposed to visit this academy, and to make friends of those youngsters, and of their friends through them. I would propose instituting a debating society, to meet once a month, or oftener, with honorary members of the men of influence in

that quarter; taking care to provide for an oration on the 4th of July by one of the members. It was successfully managed. An election to the presidency of the society was declined, for the alleged reason that the office ought to be held in connection with the school, and I was rather young to be a president; but more, in fact, because I preferred figuring as a debater, and deemed it politic to appear deferential. But no modesty of youth, or deference to older boys, was suffered to prevent my acceptance of the appointment as orator for the 4th of July, which I would endeavor to sustain to the best of my poor abilities, and hoping for all due allowance for my youth. I know not how long the society lasted; but I know that I counted that 4th of July for a day. The oration was long enough, and sufficiently spiced with youthful patriotism, the Black river boys, the pride of the country, and all that. And besides having the whole country around to hear me, there was a great dinner; and at the dinner just such a sort of toast as it tickled my vanity to hear.

Another story of very different import, and yet somewhat connected in its origin with the preceding, belongs to this summer of 1806. Towards the latter end of the summer, a camp-meeting was held in Rembert's settlement, where the people were mostly Methodists; and my uncle and family attending it, made it convenient for me also to attend. Of course this would be agreeable; for although I was not prepared to use it for the proper spiritual

purposes of such a meeting, and yet had too high a sense of propriety to go to such a place for the purpose of electioneering, still, as my youth must protect me from any imputation of bad motives, it might be well enough to go just as a friend among friends, and to make more friends. Of this camp-meeting my recollections are about as distinct as of most I have attended of later years. The number of people occupying tents was much greater than it had been at two previous meetings of the same kind, in 1802 and 1803, in that neighborhood; both of which I had attended with my uncle's family, and at which wagons and awnings made of coverlets and blankets were mostly relied on, in place of tents. The tents too, (of this meeting in 1806,) though much smaller and less commodious than in later years, were larger and better than at the former meetings. But still, at the tents as well as at the wagons of the camp, there was very little cooking done, but every one fed on cold provisions, or at least cold meats. Compared to those first two camp-meetings, this one differed also in the more important respects of management and the phases of the work of God. At the first one, (1802,) particularly, (which was held on McGirt's branch, below the point where the Statesburg and Darlington road crosses it,) I recollect little that looked like management. There were two stands for preaching, at a distance of about two hundred yards apart; and sometimes there was preaching at one, sometimes at the other, and sometimes at both

simultaneously. This was evidently a bad arrangement; for I remember seeing the people running hastily from one place to the other, as some sudden gush of feeling venting itself aloud, and perhaps with strange bodily exercises, called their attention off. As to the times of preaching, I think there were not any stated hours, but it was left to circumstances; sometimes oftener, sometimes more seldom. The whole camp was called up, by blowing a horn, at the break of day; before sunrise it was blown again; and I doubt if after that there were any regular hours for the services of the meeting. But what was most remarkable both at this camp-meeting and the following one, a year afterwards, (1803,) as distinguishing them from the present meeting of 1806, and much more from later camp-meetings, was the strange and unaccountable bodily exercises which prevailed there. In some instances, persons who were not before known to be at all religious, or under any particular concern about it, would suddenly fall to the ground, and become strangely convulsed with what was called the jerks; the head and neck, and sometimes the body also, moving backwards and forwards with spasmodic violence, and so rapidly that the plaited hair of a woman's head might be heard to crack. This exercise was not peculiar to feeble persons, nor to either sex, but, on the contrary, was most frequent to the strong and athletic, whether man or woman. I never knew it among children, nor

very old persons. In other cases, persons falling down would appear senseless, and almost lifeless, for hours together; lying motionless at full length on the ground, and almost as pale as corpses. And then there was the jumping exercise, which sometimes approximated dancing; in which several persons might be seen standing perfectly erect, and springing upward without seeming to bend a joint of their bodies. Such exercises were scarcely, if at all, present among the same people at the camp-meeting of 1806. And yet this camp-meeting was not less remarkable than the former ones, and very much more so than any I have attended in later years, for the suddenness with which sinners of every description were awakened, and the overwhelming force of their convictions; bearing them instantly down to their knees, if not to the ground, crying for mercy. At this meeting I became clearly convinced that there was an actual, veritable power of God's grace in persons then before me, and who were known to me, by which they were brought to repentance and a new life; and that with respect to the latter, (a state of regeneration and grace,) the evidence of their possessing it was as full and satisfactory as it was that they had been brought to feel the guilt and condemnation of their sins. I did not fall at any time, as I saw others do; but with the conviction clear to my apprehension as to what was the true character of the work before me, that it was of God, while I feared greatly,

I could not but desire that I might become a partaker of the benefit. Still I kept myself aloof, I knew not why.

The meeting over, I stopped for a day or two at my uncle's. The day that I left it, as I dwelt on its scenes, with the sounds belonging to those scenes still lingering on my ear, and my spirit confidently approving, I felt a lively satisfaction in the contemplation of what appeared to me to be the greatest possible discovery, which was, that a sinner could be forgiven his sins; could be reconciled to God; could have peace with God, witnessed by the Holy Spirit, through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Yet I was conscious of no painful conviction of sin; no working of a godly sorrow; no extraordinary sense of guilt; no action of repentance. Indeed, my feelings seemed absorbed in this sense of satisfaction that beyond all doubt I had learned so great a lesson. For though I had not experienced it in my own soul, I was satisfied of the verity of it by the consent of my consciousness as to what I had witnessed in others; something which I myself had also felt serving to demonstrate the truth of the whole, as piece and part of that whole. But as I was going to bed that night, I found myself strongly arrested with the thought of my responsibility for the use I should make of the light afforded me. Ought I not instantly to pray? I was a sinner, and repentance and forgiveness of sins was offered me. Must it not turn fearfully to my condemnation if I did not forthwith seek it? I fell on my knees

and continued all night in prayer to God. Returning home, I occupied myself, for several weeks, with nothing else but devotion. My whole time was given to reading the Scriptures, meditation, and prayer. And yet while I never distrusted the certainty of the great truths just stated, and although my purpose to pursue after them knew no abatement, there was no one point of time at which I was enabled to realize their fulfilment in my own case, so as to be assured that I myself had passed from death to life by the blood of Jesus. I still felt, at the best, that I was but a servant, not a son. Thus it was with me when, on one of my fast-days, having taken my Bible with me into the woods with a purpose of spending the day there in devotion, and having continued a long time on my knees, I became so much exhausted as to fall asleep. I cannot describe —it can scarcely be imagined—in what terror I awoke. Asleep at prayer! Fasting and praying with the Bible open before me, and asleep! I seemed to myself a monster of profanity, who had mocked God to his face, and must surely have committed the unpardonable sin. What was I to do? And there appeared nothing, nothing! And I was ready to condemn myself as a trifler from the beginning, whose want of reverence had thus betrayed itself in what seemed to be the most presumptuous form of sinning. Alas for me, a darkness as of death shrouded my spirit; and how I might penetrate it, I knew not.

The Hills in the neighborhood of Statesburg fur-

nish beautiful seats for residence; and in my youth, and more recently, (if not at the present time,) there was no part of South Carolina more remarkable than that neighborhood for elegance and fashion. At the time of our date, (1806,) we had within a compass of a few miles, Judge Waties, the Mayrants, General and Colonel Sumter, Mr. (afterwards Judge) Richardson, Dr. Brownfield, and others, who were permanent residents, besides still others of the élite of the low country, who passed their summers there. Balls were frequent; and the season for them was just commencing at the time of the unhappy incident just mentioned. And as if the malice and subtlety of my mortal foe had been concentrated on that fatal hour, there met me, as I returned to the house from that melancholy scene of the wood, a well-known card, "To TEA, AND SPEND THE EVENING." It was an invitation to a ball. The bare coincidence of such an invitation at such a moment seemed to tell me that I was doomed, and there was nothing better left for me. But could I so suddenly give up all hope of the better things I had been seeking? Was it impossible for me to become a spiritual Christian? And was the world my only heritage; and must I return to it in despair of ever inheriting the better world above? What an hour was that! First, there was the incubus of an undefined condemnation for the monstrosity of falling asleep on my knees. Then, I was not a Methodist; and now, probably, never could be. My religious feelings had been known to no

one out of my immediate family; and in the present state of things had better not become known, as I could not hope to be a Christian. True, I could no longer find any enjoyment in the pleasures of the gay world; but situated as I was, it would be useless to give offence, and break with my former associates.

Surely no one ever went to meet associates in a ballroom in so sad a mood. I was going to a ball as to an antechamber of the pit below; and yet I was going. I felt a loathing of it, as of a cup which had intoxicated me in time past, but which was now presented with its wine turned into gall, and yet I was going to taste of that loathsome cup. On the way I would have turned back and gone home; but no, the invitation had been accepted, and must be complied with. If I did not go, what should I answer when I might be asked for the reason of it? And might it not even serve as a rebuke of dancing for me to go and then decline dancing, of which I had been known to be exceeding fond? But enough of this unpleasant story. I went. And having gone, I danced. The hour was late when I got home and to bed—to bed without prayer! But the flurry of my spirits and bodily fatigue, after such a day and so much of such a night, made it easier for me to go to bed without prayer than I was to find it in the morning to go away from my bed without prayer. Then I was calm and recollected; and may God save you from ever suffering any thing like the sinking of

heart, and that hopelessness with which, that morning, I left that bedside without daring so much as to bow my knees. I felt as one wandering along some dark labyrinthian way, who had been given a light and had extinguished it. First, the scene of the wood the day before, and then the ball at night, and my light was out. No mitigating circumstances could avail to comfort me, and I gave up all for lost.

But there was one thing which I could not be tempted to give up. It was graven as with the point of a diamond on the tablet of my heart, and planted as with the finger of God deep and abiding in the consciousness of my nature. I would never give up the recollection of the past few weeks. And that recollection, mournful as it was, proved invaluable to me. It fixed and riveted in my mind a conviction of the truth of the gospel and spiritual religion so firmly, that no plausibility of infidel reasoning could ever afterwards shake it. And when, (as you shall see,) after so long a time, the phantasm of the unpardonable iniquity of the incident just recited had been dispelled, and I was again to be found calling upon God, no temptation ever prevailed to beat me off from the sinner's only hope, the cross of Christ and prayer.

In the winter I returned to college, fully equal to my studies as they then were, and in no great danger of excessive diligence. Still, I had a pride of associating with those whom I had so vainly striven to overtake, and to rank above my years in

the society hall if I might not in the class-room. Among the seniors of that year (1807) were William T. Brantly, the late lamented President of the college at Charleston, John Murphy, late Governor of the State of Alabama, and James Gregg, who has been for many years an honor to the bar of South Carolina, and one of her ablest senators. Of the juniors I have already mentioned William Harper, since Chancellor and a senator of the United States, Josiah J. Evans, one of the judges of South Carolina, Stephen D. Miller, late Governor of that State, and others. To my own class, as it now was, belonged William J. Grayson, since collector of the port of Charleston, Col. Wade Hampton, and others, who, if not as eminently distinguished in after-life, were nevertheless worthy.

Mr. Brantly was already a preacher, and Mr. Murphy and Mr. Gregg were patterns of pure morals and gentlemanly bearing. To these gentlemen I owed the kindest obligations, and it was probably owing, in a great measure, to their influence over me, that my indiscretions this year, whatever they may have been, partook not of the nature of gross immorality. But there was another influence which kept me, without the intervention of means of any kind, from a still more dangerous exposure. This exposure was the prevalence of Deism, against which I carried in myself an evidence too strong and conclusive to admit for a moment its half-reasoning unbelief. I had proved Christianity to be true in a way that Deism could

not reach; and as well might it have been undertaken to reason away from me my consciousness of being, as my conviction of its truth. This might be called (as it often was called) superstition, infatuation, or what not, but it made no difference to me, my consciousness was still victor, and I gloried in the truth of Christianity. "Gentlemen," I would say, (when pressed to read Tom Paine, or Hume, or any other such author,) "gentlemen, I am as you are; I am not a Christian, but a sinner; but sinner as I am, I dare not seek to evade responsibility by denying what I know to be truth. I know in myself that I am a sinner, and I know in the same manner that the Bible is the word of God, and Jesus Christ is his Son. Call not him by vile epithets whom I know to be the Son of God as certainly as I know that the light shines or the wind blows. Unbelief may make us worse, but can make us no better." But I was a paradox to myself. Naturally gay and vivacious, I engaged freely in the pastimes of the hours for recreation; and in company with those of like dispositions seemed as happy as the rest. But behind all this there slumbered a feeling of remorse, which would sometimes be aroused into a loathing of myself, and extreme sadness—a secret wound, hidden from the light of day, which the solitude of night revealed as a running sore. Yes, I might be merry in the day, when the night was to be dark with self-reproach. Alas, what is light without love? This was the consciousness which made me argue

for the Christian faith, while it had no power to make me a Christian. It seemed impossible for me to maintain the watchfulness proper to a serious self-restraint when all was gay about me; and equally so for me to pass the night without calling painfully to mind my sinful wanderings from God. And yet I was restrained from grosser immoralities. Why not more, may be told in a word: I did not pray. Solitude at night shut me up to the contemplation of a scene in which the incidents of the previous summer seemed pencilled before me: how I had had the truth of spiritual religion demonstrated to me; had been graciously drawn to seek it; and had (as still it appeared to me) profanely cast it all away. But it was that last spectacle of the scene which held me back as by a spell from prayer, though I would have given any thing to feel myself at liberty to pray. And so fully had this spectral idea got possession of my mind, *that I was shut out from prayer*, that I seemed incapable of so much as even to call it in question.

You will wonder, perhaps, at my dwelling so long on this unwelcome theme, but I cannot dismiss it hastily, for I deem it to have been of no little consequence. I mean not that it was beneficial for me to have fallen asleep at prayer, nor to have fallen under the tormenting misconceptions of the character of that act, which prevented me from attempting to pray afterwards, and in despair of becoming a Christian induced my return to former associations. And much less do I mean

that it was well for me to have gone to the ball that night, and to continue in habits of pleasurable amusement, and to live after the gay and giddy manner that I did, against my conscience, awakened as it had been to the discovery of spiritual truth. Nothing of the sort. But I mean that my wretchedness taught me understanding; and although I had not the knowledge which should have inspired courage to pray, I saw an infinite value in the privilege of access to God through the great Mediator; and by as much as I was hopeless of any good without it, and felt that the pleasures of sin were but apples of Sodom, by so much was I still held to the belief of spiritual truth as demonstrated in my present consciousness no less than in my former better experience. The present compared to the past involved a sense of destitution, not only implying a consciousness of want, but that the thing wanted had been possessed. A smoking wick compared to the lighted candle might be its emblem. And the thing wanted was that influence of the all-quickening Spirit which should renew the flame. To be a sinner under condemnation for his sins, but calling upon God in expectation of forgiveness through the blood of the cross, seemed a hopeful and desirable condition in comparison to mine, in which the great pain and plague was that I feared to pray, deeming it presumptuous for me to do so, and therefore not attempting it. Such a hag may a mistaken conscience be.

But why did I not correct my error by the Scriptures? Ah, why did I not! Why, unhappily, because, having left off to pray, I had left off also the reading of the Scriptures, as not being likely to profit me without prayer; whereas, if I had searched the Scriptures with proper care, it would probably have been blessed both to the correction of my error, and my recovery from this snare of the devil. It was not long before I came to the conclusion that I could not get better as things were; and that the only hope for me was in some such extraordinary impulse of the Holy Spirit as that which moved me so mightily on the evening after the camp-meeting; which only could assure me that I might pray with acceptance, and, with the encouragement to pray, enable me to live as a Christian ought; and that until I should be thus favored, if ever, it was needless for me to afflict myself for what I could not help; but that I would keep myself from any thing grossly immoral, and maintain steadfastly my belief in the truth of Christianity, if haply the needful visitation might be afforded me: another hurtful error. With regard to matters of the college, things went with me in the usual way, and I went with them after the same manner. There was nothing worthy of remark. The vacation was spent at home; (Woodland, on the Hills, in Sumter District;) and of this also I have little to say. Its incidents were not remarkable. Usually my mornings were occupied with some sort of reading, and my evenings

with the ladies; of whom there were not a few in our neighborhood, nor a few belles among them. Once or twice a week I spent a day with my brother Gabriel at the plantation; but I was not fond of hunting deer or of fishing; and a week at a time might be spent on a visit to my excellent brother and sister Guerry, and my much-loved uncle, who still seemed a sort of second father to me. But there was one circumstance which perhaps I should advert to, as it had some influence subsequently on my conduct. My worthy brother-in-law was very sick, and was so for a long time, so that his life was thought to be in danger; and this sickness was made the means of his awakening and conversion. I was much with him towards the latter part of the vacation; and if I could have had any misgivings before as to the truth of a spiritual religion, they must have been dissipated by what I saw in him. I said his sickness was the means of his conversion, not meaning that he was already converted in an evangelical sense of that word, but that he was awakened, and it led to his conversion. He conversed freely with me, as I also did with him; and in one of these conversations, speaking of my feelings a year before, he expressed the opinion that if I had joined the Church I would not have suffered the loss which I was then deploring. I had long been of the same opinion, and expressed, in reply to what he said, a settled purpose to do so whenever I should feel again as I had then felt the quickening

power of the Holy Spirit. I mention this here, as I shall have occasion to advert to it hereafter.

Notwithstanding this year (1807) was barren of incidents of any note, its secret history was strongly influential on my future course of life. It began, as the last had closed, with intense agitation: the buoyancy of young life bearing me away with my associates to an extreme of levity by day, and my troubled conscience lashing me as with whips of fire by night. It had passed to its seventh month, with only the change of a sort of compromise with conscience; by which I should allow myself just any thing that circumstances made convenient, short of gross immorality, and a disbelief of the Scriptures and spiritual religion; and I was, moreover, to be ever forward to avow and defend the truth of God's word; which last item in the truce with conscience cost me some little trouble. But during the vacation, I was not only withdrawn from the strife of tongues, but also from the excitement of college recreations. My recreations now were of a different sort. Indeed, I took none, and desired none, except the evenings in female society. This was not exciting, but soothing; not a whirligig of giddy passions, but a refining, elevating entertainment. Such, out of the ball-room, I had always found female society to be; for, thank God, I never associated with any whom I did not honor as ladies indeed. In a word, then, my mind was becoming more settled—less frivolous and less desponding; and though I had no

courage to betake myself to prayer or avow a religious life, the hoped-for visitation which should give me confidence began to be looked to not only as desirable but very possible; and the resolution was fully formed which should make such a visitation the occasion of an instant public avowal on my part, by joining the Church.

In this state of mind my return to college in October was not anticipated with pleasure, but rather as an undesirable necessity. There was another consideration also which began to gain some importance with me. My profession was fixed for the law; and at that time the statute required three years' study with a lawyer, in order to admission at the bar. I was ambitious of attaining to this position at the earliest allowable age; and the securing of it would not admit of my continuing in college to the time of graduation. Perhaps it was unfortunate for me that, with a sanguine temperament which might incline me to overreach myself in any circumstances, I had grown up rapidly in the last five years, and was already at my full height, five feet eight and a half inches. Nor can I deny that I was ambitious, and that my vanity was at least equal to my understanding. I had frequent conversations with my father as to the propriety of giving up my text-books at college in favor of Blackstone; in which I undervalued the studies of the senior year, as being mainly a review of the preceding, and was inclined to the opinion that after the middle of my next term, I had better

commence the study of law. My father was reluctant, and preferred that I should graduate, but waived a decision for the present time.

I should deem it most unfortunate that I had gotten this kink into my head about leaving college and commencing the study of law, were it not for the state of my mind with respect to religion. In view only of the present life and distinction at the bar, it was a great error; for so far from its being true that any portion of a college course might be dispensed with by one seeking a profession, it is to be regretted that this so frequent haste of the boys to become men before the time, should find the allowance which it does in the present too brief course of studies, which had better be extended. But in view of the whole case from the present point of time, with the lights of experience to guide me, I believe that this also was of God. My situation in college was, to say the least, very trying, and I felt it to be so. That compromise still appeared to be the best in my power there; and I was any thing but what I would choose to be in the midst of my associates, not a few of whom mocked at religion as a superstition, though in other respects they were high-minded, estimable young men. It was a hazardous experiment to be intimate with them in all their pastimes, on the principle of maintaining that one might be as gay and believe the Bible as he could be in the disbelief of it; and my nature was social, to a fault.

But the vacation over, I returned to college, and resumed my studies with considerable spirit; which was not diminished by the growing purpose I indulged of making that my last term. In other respects, I know not that any thing transpired worthy of remark.

Early the next year, (1808,) my father having yielded his consent, I took a final leave of the college, and entered myself a student at law in the office of that estimable man and eminent jurist, Mr. John S. Richardson; afterwards, for a long course of years, a judge of the courts of law of South Carolina. Mr. Richardson's office was in Statesburg; and it was agreed that my studies should be pursued for the most part at home; only arranging for so much time to be spent in the office as might be deemed desirable from time to time. Woodland was now home, emphatically, as I lived there; but I was no longer a child. A study was built for me at a pleasant spot, and I set zealously at work to make myself a lawyer. A horse was appropriated to my use, though I seldom rode except to the office, to church on Sundays, and occasionally to spend an evening with the ladies, which I was always fond to do. And now that phantom, the honor that cometh of man only, appeared in glory, as a thing to be worshipped, the chief idol of all, whose service should be honored with a high reward. What a mistake! And how common it is with other ardent young men, who no more suspect it than I myself did. Those succeed in the

race for distinction who are in love with the means of success—the mastery of their profession; and not those who, too eager of the goal, have not patience to approach it step by step. I was not, after all, in love with the law, but enamored only of the charms of a fancied glorification to be obtained as a lawyer. The law itself was mere labor—dry, plodding study; and that I did not love it for its own sake, an anecdote of the early summer will suffice to show. General Sumter had just returned home from Congress, when I was one day surprised by an invitation to dine with him; with the words written at the bottom of the note, "None but gentlemen are invited." Arriving at his mansion, I found the interpretation of these enigmatic words, in the fact that the company consisted of some twenty bachelors, of whom I was the youngest. And as soon as the cloth was removed, and Mrs. Sumter had withdrawn, the object of this unusual collection of young men to dine with the old veteran was made known in a long address, in which he told us all about our difficulties with England; the certainty of a war, and of its being a long one; the occasion it must furnish for glorious deeds and immortal honor; the great advantages for promotion to those who took office in that first enlistment which Congress had ordered; and that he was authorized by the President to promise commissions to any of us then present; whose fortunes must be made by accepting them. And what had become of my love of

the law when we rose from that table? My idol was transferred to another temple, and not as a lawyer, but a chivalrous soldier, rising rapidly to eminence and fame, was I to seek my destiny. But how were my young wings clipped, and my fancied certainty of a noble elevation by deeds to deserve it brought to the ground! My father would not hear to it; and when I expressed surprise, and alluded to his own services in the Revolutionary war as justifying the step I proposed, he really seemed almost angry. "What!" said he, "did I ever fight for myself? Was it not for the liberties of my country? But you would fight for pay, and to make yourself a name. Our liberties are not in danger; and the government is strong enough to take care of itself." And so I had to smooth down my feathers, and return to Blackstone.

Early in July of this year (1808) there was another camp-meeting in Rembert's settlement. But I did not attend it, having an engagement of business for my father in Georgetown at the time of its being held. My brother-in-law, Major Guerry, and my sister attended it, and with the happiest consequences. I have mentioned his illness the previous autumn, and that it had been blessed to the awakening of both of them to a deep concern for their salvation. They had now joined the Church, and at this camp-meeting were converted. On my return home it affected me to hear it; and I was meditating a visit to them, when they came to see

us. I used to admire my brother-in-law for a bearing of personal dignity which distinguished him above other well-bred men of my acquaintance, and which, together with his being a very large man, rendered his presence peculiarly imposing. He was unexceptionably kind and amiable, but his look would inspire reverence more than love; it was rather austere than gentle. So I had been accustomed to see him. But there now stood before me that same noble form, with a countenance as soft as love itself, and a bearing that might seem the very expression of meekness. Several times during the afternoon and early evening I saw a tear in the eye which I had not thought capable of a tear, and a suffusion on the cheek which might not have been suspected of any thing so tender. As to my sister, her dear bright eyes would laugh in tears, and she seemed the happiest of mortals. And for myself, I had in me the interpretation of it all. Here was the religion of the Spirit of grace, which I had contemplated before in faces as truthful, but not so dear to me as those of the present witnesses. How poor might the world be to purchase it! What should the world be to mortal man in comparison to it? This it was which more than twenty months before I had been so earnestly seeking, the consciousness of which had preserved me since from Deism; but which, whether or not I might ever hope to obtain it, was, alas, how fearfully uncertain!

It grew night; supper was over; it was warm,

and we were sitting in a piazza open to the south-west breeze which fans our summer evenings. My sister was singing with a soft, clear voice some of the songs of the camp-meeting; and as she paused, my father touched my shoulder with his hand and slowly walked away. I followed him till he had reached the farthest end of the piazza on another side of the house, when turning to me he expressed himself in a few brief words, to the effect that he felt himself to have been for a long time in a back-slidden state, and that he must forthwith acknowledge the grace of God in his children, or perish. His words were few, but they were enough, and strong enough. I sank to my knees and burst into tears at the utterance of them, while for a moment he stood trembling by me, and then bade me get the books. The Bible was put on the table; the family came together; he read the 103d Psalm, and then he kneeled down and prayed as if he felt indeed that life or death, heaven or hell, depended on the issue. That was the hour of grace and mercy—grace restored to my father as in times of my infancy, and mercy to me in breaking the snare of the fowler that my soul might escape. That most truly solemn and overwhelming service of the family over, I took occasion to remind my brother-in-law of our conversation the year before, when I had expressed a purpose of joining the Church without delay if ever I should be favored to feel again as I had formerly felt. This great visitation I was now conscious had been granted me, and I

wished under the influence of it to bind myself to the fulfilment of that purpose, which I promised to do the next time the circuit-preacher came to Rembert's meeting-house.

I did not consider my feelings on this occasion to imply conversion, any more than those of the night after the camp-meeting in 1806. My faith embraced not so much. But I knew them to be from God, as I had known it on that former occasion, and this alone was half a world to me. I went to bed, and bowed my knees to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, with a heart suffused with adoring gratitude. The next morning, as I awoke calm and refreshed from sleep, it was suggested to my mind that I may have been hasty in the promise I had made. What if I should not find those strong emotions under which I made it renewed again? What if possibly all that had transpired should prove to be a mere matter of sympathy, and not of God at all? I trembled at the bare suggestion, but a moment on my knees taught me whence it came, and reässured my confidence. God had visited me indeed. The flinty rock had been smitten, and gave forth water; and I, even I, had access to a throne of mercy for the Redeemer's sake. Blackstone was laid aside, and the Bible became again my one book. And now I longed with intense desire for the time to arrive when, by joining the Church, I should formally break with the world, and identify myself with those who, (at least then, and in that part of the

country,) for being the most spiritual and least worldly, were regarded the most enthusiastic and least rational of all the sects of Christians. My great want was to know God as they knew him, in the forgiveness of sins, and to serve him as they served him, not as servants only, but as sons, having the spirit of adoption, crying, Abba, Father. (Rom. viii. 15.)

It was one of the Sabbath days between the first and middle of the month of August that this event of my joining the Methodist Church took place. And to show the unqualified simplicity and hearty confidence with which it was done, I will give an anecdote, which, of itself, should not seem worth relating: The meeting over, I accompanied my brother-in-law and sister to the house of an old Methodist gentleman, (a very prototype of true Christian simplicity,) with whom they were to dine on their way home. I was dressed with more than usual care: my clothes in the point of the fashion, with a deep frill of linen cambric and a full-sized breastpin at my bosom; (bad taste certainly, for one's dress should be agreeable to one's company.) And as we sat at table, my old friend said to me: "Well, you have joined the Methodists, and now you must lay aside your breastpin and ruffles." "Why should I, sir?" I asked; and he only answered, "If you don't pull them off, you must button your waistcoat over them and hide them; you mustn't let the preacher see them." And there ended the colloquy. But it was food for thought. "Hide them!" He said that evasively; he did not

mean for me to hide them, but that I should take them off. But for what possible reason should I take them off? And I could think of none. I had heard of none, and was profoundly puzzled. Still there must be some reason for it; and what could it be? Why, the reason he had told me. I had joined the Methodists, and that was the reason. The Methodists did not wear superfluous ornaments, did they? And I could not call to mind one of them who did. Well then, thought I, the question is settled. When did I ever change the fashion of my dress for any better reason than that the fashion had changed, and I must be in the fashion? Henceforth the Methodist fashion shall be mine; and done as I am with the world, I will follow the lead of this godly people in every thing. Arrived at my brother-in-law's, my first act was to rip off the frill from my bosom, which my sister kept, as a memorial of those simple-hearted times, for many years.

That day I consider the most eventful of my life—the pivot of the rest. In the evening, that most godly man and best of ministers, the Rev. William Gassaway, favored us with his company, and passed the night, (having an appointment for the next day at Clark's meeting-house, a few miles below my brother-in-law's residence, which we purposed attending;) and fresh to my heart is the remembrance of that evening. After considerable conversation and prayer, with myself alone in his chamber, he proposed to me to meet him at Camden, some three

weeks to come, and accompany him around on his circuit. Brother Kennedy, his junior colleague, would be with him for part of the round, and he thought I would find it both pleasant and profitable. I thought so too, and gladly accepted his proposal if my father should have no objection to it. The meeting the next day was one to be remembered; and what with that, the godly counsel of my reverend friend, and the cheering influence of the joyful faith of my brother and sister, I felt confirmed in every pious resolution.

At the time, which I had been eagerly anticipating, I was in Camden; and soon found that there was much more in my being there than I had dreamed of. What was it, to my apprehension, more than a mere journey, which I was to make with my reverend friend, for the benefit of his guidance in seeking the grace of God, and that I might attend the meetings daily? And not knowing any one in Camden, nor where Mr. Gassaway might lodge; nor even thinking that if I did know, it might be proper for me to obtrude myself on strangers, I had stopped at the door of a house of entertainment, and was just alighting from my horse, when our venerated patriarch of Rembert's church, and Rembert's settlement, passing by, arrested me with, "You mustn't stop here. Haven't you come to ride with brother Gassaway? Go with me to brother Smith's." (It was that brother Smith whose praise was in all the churches, and whose memory is still precious, as one of the purest

and best of Methodist preachers; who many years before had married a relation of father Rembert's, and was now located in Camden.) And right willingly I went; not understanding, however, why riding with brother Gassaway should confer on me such consequence, nor dreaming of any technical meaning which "*riding*" with him might have. But how great was my amazement at the hour of family prayer that night, when the books were handed me by brother Smith, and I was asked to have prayers for them. Could it be right? And could I possibly perform it? But it struck me that I was not a judge. If it seemed wrong for me to offer prayers for those who were so much wiser and better than myself, that could not make it right for me to seem to know better than they by refusing to do it. So I took the books; though the extreme agitation I was under scarcely admitted of reading, and much less praying. The sanctuary, next day, was refreshing to me, as morning, afternoon and evening I heard the gospel which I believed. Monday was spent by my excellent friends Gassaway and Kennedy in visiting their flock. They took me with them, and called on me several times to pray; which I did with no little perturbation, doubting its propriety. But the next day (September 12) taxed my simple submissiveness still more severely. We left Camden for the country appointments, which began this day at a meeting-house in the pine-woods toward Lynche's creek, then called Smith's, (afterwards Marshall's,) among a very poor people. Brother Kennedy

preached; while I was seated against the wall of the house remote from the pulpit, (not knowing yet the meaning of the phrase "riding with brother Gassaway," nor dreaming that it had the least connection with any thing official on my part;) and the sermon over, he beckoned me to the pulpit. It was a sort of coarse box open at one end, and elevated a single step above the rest of the floor. Brother Gassaway was sitting in it, and reaching out his hand as I advanced, said to me, "Exhort." He said no more, but, as I seemed to hesitate, repeated the same word "*Exhort*," with a slight movement of his hand, as if to induce me to come into the pulpit, the bench of which was sufficiently taken up with himself and his colleague. It was probably the first time I had heard the word; and certainly the first of my hearing it as a technical word. "Exhort?" thought I. That is from "exoro" or "exhortor;" but what am I to make of it? What would he have me do? "Exhort," repeated my reverend friend, unconscious of using a hard word which might not be understood. And at the second or third repetition of the word, with only the interpretation of a slight pull of my hand, which he was holding, I hit on his meaning, and stepping into the box began to exhort, if I may call it so. The word served me for a text—"earnestly to beseech," "to prevail by entreaty;" and so I made an effort to beseech the people to believe and do as they had been taught by the preacher. But that afternoon and evening I was sorely troubled on this account. My

reverence for holy things was offended at my unworthiness to such a degree that it seemed impossible for me to be reconciled to myself. True, I was not capable of judging for myself in such matters, and had acted by the direction of my spiritual guides, whose competency I could not question; but then they did not know me as I knew myself, and might be misled by excess of charity. "O, brother Gassaway," said I, "I am in a wilderness. Every thing is dark about me, and I know not what to do. Surely I ought not to keep on with you, and to go back from you I am afraid." "Well, my son," said the dear old gentleman, "God has brought you thus far; lean not to your own understanding, but be humble still, and he will guide you through." To brother Kennedy, whose comparative youth made him more familiar, (or at least made me more familiar with him,) I expressed myself more at length. I was not a preacher; never to be a preacher; never could be made a preacher; and how could it be right for me to stand up in a pulpit, or anywhere else, to exhort? That I was not a preacher was certain; but he held that my exhorting did not imply that I was one, nor even that I was to become one. Every Christian man, and every one seeking with an awakened conscience to become a Christian, was at liberty to recommend religion to others, and ought in duty to do so; and my exhortation was no more than the doing of this in a formal manner.

The next day, at the house of an old gentleman

by the name of Parrish, on Lynche's creek, I was again told to exhort; and again the day following at a meeting-house called Lizzenby's; and on both these occasions I attempted to comply with the requisition. On Friday, Saturday, and Sunday we attended a Quarterly Meeting, which was conducted as a camp-meeting, at Knight's meeting-house, on Fork creek. "Work for life, as well as from life," was now the word; and while I had no need of teaching as to the worthlessness of works of any kind for the procurement of grace meritoriously, I was taught to look for the witness of adoption in denying my will, and taking up my cross as a means which God might bless. And it was not in the stand (pulpit) only, nor at stated hours, but wherever and as often as occasion served I was exhorting. At this meeting I found that unspeakable blessing which I had been so earnestly seeking, "the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father;" the Spirit itself bearing witness with my spirit that I was a child of God. A love-feast was held on Sunday morning at 9 o'clock. I had never attended one, and happened never to have made any inquiries about them; so that going into this one I knew not how it was to be conducted, nor of what the service should consist. I first found myself strongly affected on seeing one and another refused admission by the preacher at the door; a vivid representation being made to my mind of the character of the meeting, in which, as I supposed, none but approved persons could be present, and others were

rejected. At first I felt as if I too had no right to be there. It was a meeting for Christians only, and without the witness of adoption I could not claim that title. Was it partiality, or lack of information, which had let me in while others were excluded? I might not hope to be admitted into heaven thus, for God himself would be the Judge. And what should it avail me to be in the Church, and gathered in communion with its members in holy services, if at last the door of heaven should be shut against me? But I was not suffered to pursue this train of thought; but my mind was suddenly and intensely taken up with an opposite one. Was there any thing lacking to me which Christ could not give? Had he not bought me with the price of his own blood, which had pledged his willingness with his power to save? And why was I so long without the witness of adoption, except only for my unbelief? Faith that should trust him to bestow his grace, would honor him more than the unbelief that doubted of his doing so much. All this and much more was presented to my mind in an instant, and I felt an indescribable yearning after faith. Yes, I felt much more: there came with it such a prevailing apprehension (or should I not call it manifestation?) of Christ as a present Saviour, *my present Saviour*, that to believe seemed to imply no effort. I could not but believe. I saw it, as it were, and I felt it, and knew it, that Christ was mine, that I had received of the Spirit through him, and was become a child of God.

This gracious change was attended with new views as to my calling in life. I could no longer say, nor think, that I was never to be a preacher; but, on the contrary, it appeared to me, and the conviction grew stronger and stronger, that I was called to preach. The round on the circuit was made without any more such feelings as those I had complained of at the beginning of it; while I was daily concluding meetings for brother Gassaway, and generally with exhortation. At the close of the round I returned home for a week, while he was visiting his family. My father was satisfied that I should follow the course which I now thought my duty; the study of law was abandoned, and my law-books returned; and it was fully arranged for me to continue with brother Gassaway as long as he thought proper, or should remain on that circuit. I was now "riding" with him in earnest; exhorting almost as often as he preached, and employing the time at my command between services in studying the Scriptures. But I might not get on thus smoothly without molestation. I think it was during my second round that I began to be worried with the lameness of my exhortations; which appeared to me insufferably weak; and took up an idea that to make a preacher at all, I must pursue a different course from the one I was engaged in. What appeared to me desirable, and even necessary for my success, was a regular course of divinity studies, which I should pursue without interruption for several years, till I had acquired a sufficient fund

of knowledge for preaching. The brief methodistic course of brother Gassaway was, to study and preach, and preach and study, from day to day. It was several weeks before I could be brought to acquiesce in his opinion; and for most of that time, so clearly reasonable and proper did it appear to me to desist from all public exercises till I should have qualified myself to perform them in a manner worthy of the sacred office, and it was a point so closely concerning conscience, that I must have caused my excellent friend some uneasiness. However, his patient spirit was sufficient to the trial, and most kindly and affectionately did he still argue on. One point which he made, and a capital one, I thought he carried against me. I had supposed two years to be necessary for the study of divinity before I should exercise at all in public; and that the qualification gained for more effective service in future by these two years of close study, would more than compensate for the loss of time from such imperfect efforts as I might essay in the mean time on his plan of studying and preaching, and preaching and studying. And the point he made was, as to the qualification to be gained for future usefulness at the lapse of two or more years, by the one course or by the other; holding it probable that a student on his plan would become a better preacher at the end of a term of years than he would on mine. He admitted that on my plan he might learn more theology, and be able to compose a better thesis, but insisted he would not make a better preacher.

In this argument he insisted much on the practical character of preaching: that to reach its end, it must be more than a well-composed sermon, or an eloquent discourse, or able dissertation. It must have to do with men as a shot at a mark; in which not only the ammunition should be good, but the aim true. The preacher must be familiar with man to reach him with effect. And the force of preaching must largely depend, under the blessing of God, on the naturalness and truthfulness of the preacher's postulates; arguing to the sinner from what he knows of him, the necessities of his condition, appealing to his conscience, and recommending the grace of God. But he quite overcame me with this final remark. It was as we were riding along that dreary sand-hill road in Chesterfield District leading from the Court-house toward Sumterville, and I seemed more than usually earnest in my objections, that, after quite a speech on my side of the question, he thus answered me: "Well, Billy, it is only supposition, after all. And if you are called to preach, and sinners are daily falling into hell, take care lest the blood of some of them be found on your skirts." Sure enough, it was only "supposition." The true question was as to usefulness, not eminence; and with respect to *that* matter, at least, I could only *suppose*, and could not certainly know, that it might be better for me to desist from my present course and adopt another. Here then ended that difficulty about the exclusive study of divinity. I instantly

gave it up, and thanked my friend for his pains and patience with me.

The Santee Circuit at that time extended from a meeting-house called Ganey's, some four miles above Chesterfield, which was its highest appointment, to Tawcaw, near Santee river, which was its lowest. And it was on this my second round with brother Gassaway, (October, 1808,) that we attended a camp-meeting at Tawcaw; where it pleased God to give me the encouragement of making my very imperfect exhortations instrumental of good among the people. In particular, that estimable and engaging young man, Joseph Gallu-chat, afterward for many years so well known and much beloved in Charleston for his abilities and spotless character as a preacher, acknowledged so humble an instrumentality as this, the means of his awakening and conversion. And this circumstance tended no little to confirm me in the purpose I had formed, (I trusted, under the influence of the Holy Spirit,) to devote myself to the work of preaching the gospel of Christ.

During my third and last round of riding with brother Gassaway, and as late in the season as past the middle of November, a camp-meeting was held at Rembert's; (the second one at the same place that year.) And this being also the occasion of the last Quarterly Meeting for the circuit, at the advice of brother Gassaway, (Bishop Asbury also approving,) I was licensed to preach, and was

recommended to the Annual Conference to be admitted on trial in the itinerancy. This was done, first the license and then the recommendation, on the 25th of November, 1808. A camp-meeting was held at so late a period in the season because the people were in the spirit of it; and for the special reason that the Bishops, Asbury and McKendree, had appointed to meet on official business, which would occupy them several days, at that time, at the house of their old friend, (the Gaius of those days,) James Rembert, immediately in the neighborhood, and they would attend the meeting. The weather was very cold, colder than November usually is; but the camp-meeting was one of the best I have ever known. Different from those of former years as to the preparations made for personal comfort, a large area of several acres was enclosed with lines of well-built tents furnished with fire-places; so that the cold, though inconvenient, did us no harm. At this meeting it was arranged that I should continue on the circuit till after the Annual Conference, which the preachers were shortly to attend. Brother Gassaway had already concluded his work, and I was to keep up a round of appointments in his place. But I cannot quite so briefly dismiss the meeting at which my brothers Gabriel and John were brought to the knowledge of God, and I first saw Bishop Asbury, and witnessed his first meeting with my father since the former days when he used to find a home with him at Bull-Head.

But let me here drop the thread of my narrative, for a few sentences, to connect this meeting with Bishop Asbury with those former days when my father's house was one of his favorite homes. It may serve a purpose later in my story, when I shall have occasion to mention his regard for me; which I would by no means have you appropriate to my own separate merits. I have already mentioned the fact that my father was one of the first race of Methodists in South Carolina, and a decided and influential one; and intimated, farther on, that he had declined from his spirituality some time after his removal to Georgetown District; and that it was not till the present year (1808) that he recovered it. You will remember that on Dr. Coke's visit to America in 1791, he was accompanied from the West Indies to Charleston by Mr. William Hammett, who remained there on account of his health; and that this Mr. Hammett, choosing to remain for life in Charleston, found some occasion to object to Mr. Asbury and the American preachers, as if they had done him a wrong on account of his devotion to Mr. Wesley; Mr. Asbury being (as he represented) ambitious of supplanting Mr. Wesley with the American people. What I shall say of it is derived from my father, and a parcel of letters between Mr. Hammett and Mr. Wesley—which came into my possession from a son of Mr. Hammett, as a token of his regard. I set it down succinctly from these authorities. Mr. Hammett's representation to Mr. Wesley by letter

was fully and strongly to the above effect; and Mr. Wesley's answers to Mr. Hammett showed that he believed it. Similar representations made by Mr. Hammett at the same time to the principal Methodist gentlemen in Charleston and the Parishes, were thus confirmed by Mr. Wesley's letters; from which it might appear that since the Revolutionary war, which carried Mr. Rankin back to England, Mr. Wesley had had no such confidential son in America as he deemed Mr. Hammett to be. Those letters were to the date of the year 1791, in which Mr. Wesley died. Mr. Hammett therefore had the confidence of Mr. Wesley (by what means does not appear) to the last of his life; and on that foundation he raised his society of Primitive Methodists, both in Charleston and Georgetown. And when we consider that there were then no Methodist books published in America, and the people knew little of Methodism, or of the action of the Conferences, but what they got verbally from the preachers; and that Mr. Hammett had been introduced by Dr. Coke as one of the most godly as well as the most gifted of the preachers, the wonder is not that he should have drawn off to himself, under a banner inscribed "Wesley against Asbury," some of the most influential of the people, but we might wonder rather that he did not seduce them all; and the more, as he was unquestionably an eloquent and able man, of fine person and engaging manners, and at first vastly popular. But his work did not prosper.

He had estranged his adherents, of whom my father was one, from the rest of the Methodists, whom they called "the Asbury Methodists," for no good result either to himself or them. But to return.

I was introduced to Bishop Asbury immediately on his first coming to the camp-meeting, as I happened to be in the preachers' tent at the time of his arrival. I approached him timidly, you may be sure, and with a feeling of profound veneration; but "Ah," said he, "this is the baby; come and let me hug you:" meaning that I was the baby when he was last at my father's house. On my father's entering the tent, he rose hastily from his seat and met him with his arms extended, and they embraced each other with mutual emotion. It had been some seventeen years since they had seen each other; and yet the Bishop asked after Sally and Gabriel, as if it had been but a few months, and repeated gleefully, "I have got the baby!" It was evident that no common friendship had subsisted between them; and how much happier had those years of estrangement been to my honored father if they had been passed in the fellowship which he had been seduced to leave! I hate schism, I abhor it as the very track and trail of him who "as a roaring lion walketh about seeking whom he may devour."

The camp-meeting over, I betook myself to the circuit, as had been agreed upon; not with the fatherly sympathies and wise and godly counsels

of my friend Gassaway to sustain me, but to act alone; and that not as an exhorter only, but as a preacher, filling daily appointments to preach. To say that I felt incompetent, would not express a moiety of my self-distrust. It was an incompetency in which a lack of every qualification except a sense of duty and a desire to fulfil it seemed to be present. But the good people of the circuit were kind and affectionate, so that I was not permitted to know if ever they considered me less than acceptable. A few days only at home after this round on Santee Circuit, and I got intelligence of my appointment for the ensuing year, from Conference. That Conference had been held at Liberty Chapel, in Greene county, Georgia, the 26th of December, 1808; and was attended by both of the Bishops, Asbury and McKendree. I heard subsequently that my admission had been objected to by several of the preachers, on the ground that not having yet been six months on trial, and by consequence not in full connection with the membership of the Church, I was ineligible; but that the objection was overruled by the Bishops; Bishop Asbury deciding that in the absence of any express prohibition, though the inference by analogy was against it, the Conference was free to act, and admit me, if they deemed it proper, on the merits of the case. I have known so many mistakes about episcopal decisions, (and when, too, the reporters seemed very positive,) that I will not undertake to say that the reasons of the decision in

this case were as I was told they were. But it is certainly and exactly true beyond doubt or dispute, that the objection above stated was made and urged earnestly, particularly by my venerable friend, then in his prime, Lewis Myers; and that the Bishops (or Bishop Asbury, Bishop McKendree being present and not dissenting) did decide against it; and that I was then admitted, when I had been but about five months on trial as a member of the Church. And it is equally true that the Bishop was not complained of for his decision; and that no subsequent General Conference deemed it proper to take any exception to his administration, nor provide against the like in future, as I have known done in a recent case.

I was appointed to the Wateree Circuit, which at that time extended from Twenty-five-mile creek, on the west side of the Wateree river, to Lann's Ford on the Catawba; and on the east side, from the neighborhood of Camden to within twelve miles of Charlotte. Within this broad range there were twenty-four preaching-places, and the time of a round was four weeks, the distance about three hundred miles, the membership of the circuit four hundred and ninety-eight whites and one hundred and twenty-four colored. And yet I was alone, the scarcity of preachers not allowing me a colleague. If I felt my insufficiency on the round which I had just concluded in Santee Circuit, where nothing more was required but to preach and meet the classes, how much more now, when, with so

wide a field before me, and so numerous a membership to serve, the whole pastoral care devolved on me without a helper. I had not dreamed that one so young as I was might be put in charge at all. But so it was. Nevertheless, I had not done it; and should only have to answer for the manner in which my duties might be performed. Thus with fear and trembling, but not without the courage which a sense of duty and an upright purpose inspires, I set out to my circuit. I was in time for the first appointment on the plan, at Sawney's creek meeting-house, January 7, 1809. Here lived that most remarkable man, J J., whose goodness no one ever doubted, but whose zeal was always brandishing in the temple a scourge of not very small cords, as if for fear that some one might be present who did not love the temple well enough to take a scourging for it, and who ought therefore to be driven out; and in full faith that the more men were beaten the better for them, as it would make them more humble and less worldly-minded. His was the first house I entered in my new field of labor; and, if I might have been driven off by the first discouragement, he might have made my first my last appearance in that quarter. I seemed to be younger, greener, and a poorer prospect for a preacher in his estimate than even in my own; and he was an old preacher, and withal a famous one. That first introduction to the responsiblities of my new charge was after this sort:

"Well, have they sent *you* to us for a preacher?"

"Yes, sir."

"What, *you*, and the egg-shell not dropped off of you yet! Lord, have mercy upon us! And who have they sent in charge?"

"No one, sir, but myself."

"What! *you*, by yourself? *You* in charge of the circuit? Why, what is to become of the circuit? The Bishop had just as well have sent nobody. What can you do in charge of the circuit?"

"Very poorly, I fear, sir, but I dare say the Bishop thought that you would advise me about the Discipline, and I am sure he could not have sent one who would follow your advice more willingly, brother J., than I will."

"So, so. I suppose then I am to take charge of the circuit for you, and you are just to do what I tell you?"

"I would be very glad, sir, to have you take the charge of the circuit."

"Did ever! What, I, a local preacher, take charge of the circuit? And is that what you have come here for? Why, man, you know nothing about your business. How can *I* take charge of the circuit? No, no; but I can see that you do it, such a charge as it will be; and if *I* don't, nobody else will, for these days the Discipline goes for nothing." And he groaned deeply.

Such was the colloquy as well as I can rehearse

it; and you may be sure it made an impression deep enough to remain with me.

But how could I endure all this? In the first place, I recognized my censor as one of the fathers of the Church, whose character I had heard of as alike remarkable for goodness and severity; a holy man, and zealous above his fellows, who always carried a rod as well as a staff; and deeply feeling, as I did, the evil which oppressed him, I was prepared to attribute his severity to its proper cause, and not to any personal unkindness. And then there sat before me his saintly wife; one of the meekest, gentlest, and best of her sex, whom, at first sight, I had taken for a mother; and if sister J. would love me, my old brother might talk on. I knew that there was cause of trouble to his spirit in the unprovided state of the circuit, and thought that he was only venting his troubled feelings, without meaning me any wrong. And this very conversation served to tell me that my motherly sister did love me. I saw it in every muscle of her face, while her sympathies were stirred too intensely for concealment. Ah, thought I, woman for ever! You may be no better than your husband, but you are incomparably more lovely.

The next day I was to preach; and I felt somewhat hopeful at night, on perceiving that he was not disposed to renew his severities, and that, with all his austerity, he was evidently pleased with the interest which his wife took in me, even making a suggestion to her occasionally, which seemed to

mean that she might use her balsam freely. But his remarks were ill-judged, and did me harm. As for the matter of personal offence, it was nothing. I took no offence at it. But after I had left his house, and was gone on my work, that lashing, scorching colloquy would recur, as if a prophet had told me from the Lord that I was out of my place on that circuit.

My second appointment, after leaving brother J.'s, brought me to a place called Granny's Quarter, (the name of a creek some twelve miles above Camden,) of which I give another sort of anecdote: My mind was intensely occupied with the study of the Discipline, particularly the section on the duties of preachers who have the charge of circuits. And it happened that the eighth item of the answer to question two of that section, which made it my duty "to recommend everywhere decency and cleanliness," had arrested my attention. It was Discipline, and must be obeyed; but how extremely delicate, thought I, must the duty sometimes be! But there was a case just at hand. The house at which I stopped was exceeding dirty, so that cleanliness was out of the question, and even decency put to the blush. But it was the house of a brother and sister. Cleanliness was next to godliness; the Discipline required of Methodists to be cleanly, and of me to recommend it everywhere. If I neglected my duty under the Discipline, the people might neglect theirs; and if this particular one, then any other as they liked. The case was clear; my duty

plain; but how to go to work in such a matter was the question. Something must be done, and that directly to the point. I must recommend cleanliness to the sisterly housekeeper, or neglect my duty and seem to wink at her uncleanliness. How was I to do it? This question was uppermost in my mind all the evening; but to no purpose, for not a word could I find to say. The next morning my thoughts were still on my new and difficult task, how to recommend cleanliness to my sister so as to induce her to keep her house clean; and still it seemed a thing past my accomplishment. Breakfast was brought in, and no expedient could I think of, till, turning up my plate, which was of pewter, and observing the color of it to be of that dingy cast which it contracts from being used without rubbing, I began pretty much as follows:

"Where did you get your plates, sister? They are excellent for use at a distance from town, where the breakage of crockery is often inconvenient, and I wonder that I don't meet with such oftener."

"Got them at Mr. ——'s, in Camden. They are mighty good for not breaking, but they don't look as pretty as queensware does, is the reason, I reckon, why people don't have them."

"Well, but if they are clean, you know, their looking dark don't make any odds. Cleanliness, to be sure, is next to godliness; but then it may be with that as with most other things which may not be just as they look. I have seen things that looked clean when they were not clean, and these

plates are clean, I am sure, though they look rather darker than you would like to see them."

Her countenance here showed that she took the hint, and, I thought, took it well; so I proceeded, and told of a sister whom I loved very much for her Christian qualities and her neat housekeeping, who cleaned her pewter by rubbing it briskly with fine sand on a piece of coarse woollen, just as I had seen it done with brickdust, which I thought better. This served for the pewter plates. Knives and forks required the same sort of rubbing, as they also contracted a dirty look by only washing and wiping them, no matter how clean. I did not like, though, the way I had sometimes seen some little negroes doing it, by jobbing them into the ground. It was better to rub the knives briskly across a soft piece of plank on which brickdust or dry ashes had been laid. And thus I proceeded to the end of the chapter; relieving it as best I could, and watching closely the countenance of my pupil, lest I should offend her. My work was done, and, judging of the cause by the effect, it was well done; for I never afterwards found that a dirty house. The pewter plates and knives and forks were not only cleaned, but made to look clean; and my sister became one of the kindest and most affectionate of my sisters. I stopped with them every round I made, and found myself always a welcome guest and in comfortable quarters.

The general feeling of discouragement which was apt to follow a recollection of the strong terms

in which brother J. had expressed his disappointment at my being sent to the circuit and in charge, began early on this first round to work temptation. Startled as he appeared to be at the unsuitableness of the appointment, perhaps others might not credit it at all. The country was strange, though it was not far from home; no one knew me, nor had ever heard of me, and I might be rejected as an impostor. Riding up to my preaching-places, the stare of the people seemed to say, "It is impossible; this boy cannot be the man." If, as I passed through the company going into the meeting-house, any one accosted me, the impression was, I am suspected and shall be asked for my credentials. And this was the more annoying as I had not with me a single line to certify my appointment, nor that I was a preacher at all. It was on my second or third round, that, coming to brother J 's, he asked me in his usual earnest manner how many members I had turned out at H. meeting-house. "None, sir." "What, do you let the people get drunk, run for the bottle and turn up jack, and keep them in the Church?" "My dear sir, I hope nobody does so at H. I am sure I never heard of it." "A pretty piece of business," rejoined he; "why, at Polly H.'s wedding a whole parcel of them ran for the bottle, and old J. A. held it, and got drunk into the bargain. And now you, *the preacher in charge*, come here and tell me that you never heard of it, though I can hear of it forty miles off." This was a poser for me. I had not a word to say.

Can he be mistaken, thought I? Surely not, or he would not speak so positively. And then he gives me names. But how could such monstrous wrong-doing have been perpetrated without my getting at least some inkling of it? I had not confidence enough to ask him any questions, but sat confounded under a second flagellation, the wordy strokes of which, however, were of little consequence compared to the facts stated, that such immoralities had been practiced, and that the perpetrators had not been brought to trial. But this was to be the last of my trials from brother J. that year. With feelings too sad for society, I took the earliest hour for retirement. My bed was in an upper room, the floor of which was made of loose plank, without ceiling of any kind at the lower edges of the joists, which might have obstructed the passage of sounds from the room below. And I had not been long in bed before I heard my kind-hearted sister say, "O, Mr. J., you don't know how much you have grieved me." "Grieved you, Betsey," replied he; "how in the world can I have grieved you?" "By the way you have talked to brother Capers. I am afraid he will never come here again. How can you talk to him so?" "Why, Betsey, child," returned he, "don't you reckon I love Billy as well as you do? I talk to him so because I love him. He'll find people enough to honey him without my doing it; and he has got to learn to stand trials, that's all." Sister J. seemed not to be satisfied, but wished to

extort a promise that he would not talk so roughly to me any more. But his conscience was concerned in that, and he would not promise it. "You may honey him," said he, "as much as you please, but I go for making him a Methodist preacher." Well then, thought I, it is a pity, my old friend, that you should spoil your work by not tightening your floor. You might as well have promised it, for I will take care that you shall not make any thing by the refusal. The next morning it was not long before something fetched up the unpleasant theme, and as he was warming into the smiting spirit, I looked in his face and smiled. "What!" said he, "do you laugh at it?" "As well laugh as cry, brother J.," I returned; "did you not tell sister J. last night that you loved me as well as she did, and only wanted to make a Methodist preacher of me? I am sure you would not have me cry for any thing that is to do me so much good." It was all over: he joined in the laugh, and threw away his seeming ill-humor. But as for the matter of the immoralities at H., it turned out to be all a hoax. Some wag, knowing how much such a circumstance would trouble him, probably originated the tale just for that purpose.

But I could not so easily divest myself of the impression made on my mind by that first conversation with him. "What was to become of the circuit?" and, "The Bishop had as well have sent nobody," were words I could not digest. Surely, I thought, they must express his judgment as to my

unfitness for my work, "the egg-shell not dropped off of me yet." That judgment being against me, is the foundation of all this harshness after all; and perhaps I had as well give up the circuit and return home. My mind became cloudy and uncomfortable, and I was next tempted to doubt my being called to preach; so that before the first Quarterly Meeting I was in great perplexity and sore trouble. Indeed, I would have left the circuit, but for the consideration that I was bound by contract with the Conference to the contrary; for such appeared to me to be the nature of the transaction in which I had offered myself for the itinerancy, had been accepted, and was appointed to the circuit. At the Quarterly Meeting, however, I would see the presiding elder who represented the Conference, state the whole case to him, and get myself discharged. In the mean time I proposed to relax nothing in the way of official duty; as, at the worst, I might be no worse than the Scribes sitting in Moses' seat, and the people had better hear the gospel from my lips, and have the Discipline administered by me, than be left wholly to themselves; especially as I was exceeding nice to avoid all speculation, and stick closely to the books. But at the Quarterly Meeting no opportunity presented for such a conversation with the presiding elder as I wished, before preaching on Saturday. He preached, and the sermon seemed to have been formed for me. I was greatly comforted and relieved; so that the whole time of his presence in the circuit passed without my saying

a word of what had been intended. And yet he was scarcely gone before the temptation returned with redoubled violence, and I became unhappy. There were several excellent men, local preachers, in the circuit, (that father in Israel, Robert Hancock, for one,) to whom I might have opened my mind to great advantage, but Satan hindered me. The prevailing suggestions for secrecy were, that even as things were I might scarcely hope to do any good, but to let it be known that I was not called to preach, and yet was preaching, would turn the people away from their duty altogether; and that if I advised with any but brother J., whose judgment I had already, the delicacy of the subject and kindness of their feelings would get the better of their judgment, and mislead me. To give up the work I could not for the reason stated; and to continue in it under such extreme embarrassment, seemed scarcely to be a smaller evil.

It was in such circumstances that, attending an appointment at Carter's meeting-house, in Chester District, I had the painful duty to perform of expelling one of the members on a charge of *crim. con.* It was a female. Her father-in-law, and the connections on that side generally, believed her guilty; her husband held her to be innocent, and was partially deranged on account of the affair; and all the society and most of the people of the neighborhood were intensely enlisted for or against the accused. The trial was conducted with exact conformity to Discipline, and her triers found her

guilty. But on declaring the judgment of the triers, and pronouncing her expulsion, a riot ensued and considerable violence. Coming out of the meeting-house, I heard of the "egg-shell" from this quarter, a woman exclaiming at the top of her voice, "He had better go home and suck his mammy." Several were fighting, and among the rest was the poor crazy husband fighting his father. I recognized several members of the Church among those who if not actually fighting were ready for it, and profanely boisterous. And this sad affair helped me much. The "egg-shell," and "sucking my mammy," from the lips of a vulgar woman, changed entirely the character of my fancied disqualification for the work I was engaged in; while I knew that in that instance, at least, my duty had been well and rightfully done; and that the imputation came from none of the Lord's prophets, but one of those who were of the synagogue of Satan. It served me also another purpose. It roused me from a constant brooding over my unworthiness; as it furnished a new subject for my mind to act on, of sufficient interest to engage it fully. What was to be done, when I should come to Carter's meeting-house on my next round, to reduce this confusion to the order of the gospel, became the question, instead of what I was to do with myself. At the time, there was a very large congregation assembled as if for some uncommon cause; but I preached on the truth and necessity of conversion, as if nothing unusual had taken place. After sermon, I

made the usual appointment to meet the society apart from the congregation, and told them that I felt a special solicitude to have every one remain for the society meeting whose name had been left in the church-book at my last appointment. I knew, and it was known to them, that some unhappy things had transpired. Several weeks had since passed, there had been time for reflection, and I earnestly begged them all to remain. They all did remain; and after opening the meeting with singing and prayer, I took the class-paper, and calling the first name on the list, instead of addressing the individual, as usual, with some question about the state of his soul, I asked of the rest if there was any thing against him; telling them, at the same time, that, in view of what had passed among them four weeks before, and possibly other things since, I was deeply concerned to have them in peace in order to the blessing of God upon them. Peace we must have, or, in the absence of it, a curse from the Lord instead of a blessing. And I adjured them, if any one knew aught against the brother named, he or she should make it known. They need not state what was the objection just then; we would inquire about it afterwards; but only say there is something against him. If there was nothing against him, they might keep their peace. I should proceed to call the whole list in the same manner, for the same purpose, that it might be known who was without blame among them; and I warned them that if at any time there should arise any strife or quarrel

between any of them on account of any thing which had then transpired, and of which complaint being then called for none was made, the person originating it should be held guilty of disturbing the peace of the Church, and be accordingly brought to trial. If either of them knew aught against a brother or sister to interrupt their peace and fellowship, they should then make it known, by only saying one word: that was, there is something (no matter what) against that brother or sister. At that moment I felt that, for once, the boy was a man. I had the bull by the horns and was able to manage him. God had heard my prayers, directed my mind aright, and given me strength and courage. Having gone through the list, I had gotten a committee of persons to whom no one might object, for the trial of all the rest; and before the sun went down we had finished our work, with the expulsion of not more than two persons.

There are and ought to be exceptions to any general rule. The evil is, (and it is a great abuse of a just principle,) when the exception is plead as a precedent, and put in the place of the rule itself for an ordinary or not so extraordinary a case. I had seen at the time referred to, a member of the Church, and a clever man, with his coat thrown off as if for a fight; and he did fight; and yet we did not expel him. The melee in which he saw his brother fighting his father, had surprised him into the transgression; from which he quickly withdrew, and betook himself in agony to prayer. And the

testimony was, that for more than two days and nights he neither ate nor drank, but upbraided himself as one of the worst of offenders. He then found peace, and at the time of this general trial was exceeding happy, saying, "Expel me, brethren, for the sake of the cause, but let me join again." And what would it have been to have expelled him, and then taken him back again? Or would it have been right to treat him as another ought to have been treated?

Some time before this I had taken a new place into the circuit, on the eastern side of it, called Shaffner's; at which my preaching was much blessed, and a society raised, among a plain but very worthy people who had never before heard Methodist preaching. And about the same time the large and well-established society at McWhorter's meeting-house, in Mecklenburg county, N. C., began to be favored with refreshing seasons, and an increase of members. At several other places, also, good was evidently done; so that by the time of my second Quarterly Meeting, I was enabled to discover that my extreme discouragement was owing to temptation, and not that I had obtruded myself uncalled into the ministry. Afterwards to the close of the year, there was no place where my ministry was more favored than at Carter's meeting-house, and, except perhaps McWhorter's, none where I had larger or more attentive congregations.

In July of this year, (I think it was,) we had another camp-meeting, at Rembert's in Santee Cir-

cuit; and I was permitted to attend it. It was held at the same place as those of the previous year, and was of the same character, both for the great numbers of people, white and colored, who attended it, and the powerful influence of the gospel among them. Perhaps there is no spot in Carolina, if in any other State, so remarkable for the number of persons converted at its camp-meetings as this one. It was on the land of that old disciple, Henry Young, and I remember hearing him say that he had known of more than five hundred persons converted there, from 1808 to 1815, inclusive. But I mentioned this camp-meeting for a recollection that on my return from it to my circuit, I lost the only appointment which I ever did lose on any circuit on account of inclement weather. I was at my uncle's, and fond as I was to be there, I suffered myself to be persuaded to remain a day; as by setting out the next morning at daylight I might reach the place of preaching by riding twenty-five miles before the hour. My good aunt had my breakfast ready before it was day, but it was raining extremely hard, and "wait" became the word. I waited till past any practicable hour for the ride, and the weather was still no better; but then it cleared off, and my congregation went to meeting without finding me. Many a time afterwards the recollection of this incident decided me to go when there was little or no prospect of finding any one to preach to; as I never found any weather so uncomfortable as I

had been taught in this instance my feelings must be if I disappointed a congregation. And having written this desultory paragraph, I will add another, which may serve for a comparison of the past with the present with respect to an important point embraced in the bounds of my circuit, though not then a preaching-place.

A young lawyer of my acquaintance had settled himself (though it proved not to be permanent) at Lancaster Court-house, and came to my appointment at Camp creek, to get me to take the village into my round. An appointment was made for preaching there, and on the day appointed I was early at the village. But it happened to be sale-day; the court-house yard was well feathered with carts retailing cakes and cider, and probably peach-brandy and whisky, and the customers were too much engrossed with these good things to allow of any thing better. Preaching was postponed till night, when it was thought the sober ones would attend, and the drunken ones be gone home. The text was, (Num. xxii. 38,) "And Balaam said unto Balak, Lo, I am come unto thee: have I now any power at all to say any thing? The word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak." And as I was saying something about Balaam and Balak which I thought suitable, some one rose up in the congregation, and stepping a little forward, cursed me with a loud, angry voice, and bade me quit that gibberish and go to my text. Nobody clapped him, and nobody reproved him, but it excited a

general titter. I did as I was bidden, but to no better purpose; he came a little nearer, and swore that he could preach better than that himself, saying, "Now, Mr., jist give me them thar books, and you'll see." This appeared exceeding funny, and of course the titter was renewed with increase. And a third time he swore lustily that he could beat me a preaching all hollow, and if he were in my place he would go home and never try again. I did, however, try it once more, and only once more at that place. And then, as a set-off to the previous outrage, the sheriff of the district fixed a dancing-party for the night, in special honor, as I was told, of the young preacher; and I was invited, (in earnest,) to attend it. That was the Lancaster Court-house of 1809; and as I was to go by the Discipline in every thing, I gave it up under the rule of section xiv., answer to question 1. I had no lack of preaching-places.

The latter part of the year passed off without any thing remarkable more than is usually met with. My old friend J., whose unfortunate austerity had been at first so injurious to me, had become one of my kindest friends, and the most reliable of my advisers in all cases of difficulty. Everywhere I was treated with affection; and at most places I had brothers and sisters whom I loved as if I had been born with them. And these were the great means of my deliverance from the sore temptations of the past time: the fruit which it pleased God to give me of my labors, the

affectionate confidence of the people, and my love for them.

At the close of the year, Bishop Asbury passed through my circuit on his way to Conference; and it was arranged for me to meet him at Waxaws, (General Jackson's birthplace,) and attend him along a somewhat circuitous route to Camden. I met him at the house of that most estimable man and worthy local preacher, Robert Hancock, who had been more than a friend to me, even a father, from the beginning. The Bishop was then accompanied by the Rev. Henry Boehm as his travelling companion; so long afterwards known in the Philadelphia Conference as one of the purest and best of Methodist ministers, and whose society I found to be as "the dew of Hermon." This was the last of my itinerant year on Wateree Circuit; and as I have had quite enough of the disagreeable in my account of it, I will end the chapter (perhaps more to your liking) with an anecdote of my first night and last night on this trip with the Bishop. I met him when a heavy snow had just fallen, and the north-west wind blowing hard made it extremely cold. The snow had not been expected, and our host was out of wood; so that we had to use what had been picked up from under the snow, and was damp and incombustible. Our bed-room was a loft, with a fireplace to it and plenty of wood; but how to make the wood burn was the question. I had been at work blowing and blowing, long before bedtime,

till, to my mortification, the aged Bishop came up, and there was still no fire to warm him. "O Billy, sugar," said he, as he approached the fireplace, "never mind it; give it up: we will get warm in bed." And then stepping to his bed, as if to ascertain the certainty of it, and lifting the bedclothes, he continued, "Yes, yes, give it up, sugar, blankets a plenty." So I gave it up, thinking the play of my pretty strong lungs might disturb his devotions, for he was instantly on his knees. Well, thought I, this is too bad. But how for the morning? Bishop Asbury rises at four—two hours before day—and what shall I do for a fire then? No lightwood, and nothing dry. But it occurred to me that the coals put in the midst of the simmering wood might dry it sufficiently to keep fire and prepare it for kindling in the morning; so I gave it up. But then, how might I be sure of waking early enough to kindle a fire at four o'clock? My usual hour had been six. And to meet this difficulty, I concluded to wrap myself in my overcoat, and lie on the bed without using the bedclothes. In this predicament I was not likely to oversleep myself on so cold a night; but there might be danger of my not knowing what hour it was when I happened to awake. Nap after nap was dreamed away, as I lay shivering in the cold, till I thought it must be four o'clock; and then creeping softly to the chimney and applying the breath of my live bellows, as I held my watch to the reluctant coals to see the hour, I had just made

it out, when the same soft accents saluted me, "Go to bed, sugar, it is hardly three o'clock yet." This may do for that first night; and the last was as follows: It had rained heavily through the night, and we slept near enough the shingles for the benefit of the composing power of its pattering upon them. It was past four o'clock, and the Bishop was awake, but "Billy sugar" lay fast asleep. So he whispered to Brother Boehm not to disturb me, and the fire was made, they were dressed, had had their devotions, and were at their books, before I was awake. This seemed shockingly out of order; and my confusion was complete, as, waking and springing out of bed, I saw them sitting before a blazing fire. I could scarcely say good morning, and the Bishop, as if he might have been offended at my neglect, affected not to hear it. Boehm, who knew him better, smiled pleasantly, as I whispered in his ear, Why didn't you wake me? The Bishop seemed to hear this, and closing his book, and turning to me with a look of downright mischief, had an anecdote for me. "I was travelling," said he, "quite lately, and came to a circuit where we had one of our good boys. O, he was so good! and the weather was as cold as it was the other night at brother Hancock's; and as I was Bishop Asbury, he got up in the bitter cold at three o'clock to make a fire for me. And what do you think? He slept last night till six." And he tickled at it as if he might have been a boy himself. And this was that Bishop Asbury whom

I have heard called austere: a man, confessedly, who never shed tears, and who seldom laughed, but whose sympathies were, nevertheless, as soft as a sanctified spirit might possess.

The time of Conference (December, 1809) was spent at home, and in visiting my sister and uncle, with great satisfaction. And at the first intelligence I was ready to be off to my next circuit, which was Pee Dee, (comprehending the present Black River and Darlington Circuits,) stretching from the neighborhood of Georgetown upward through Williamsburg and a part of Sumter District, to a point on Lynche's creek about opposite to Darlington Court-house, thence across that creek to a short distance above a smaller one called the Gully, and downward by Darlington Court-house and Jeffers's creek, so as to include all of that part of the country lying on the west side of Pee Dee river and the route just described. On this circuit I had for my colleague the Rev. Thomas D. Glenn, who was in charge. My recollections supply little concerning myself for the six months that I was continued on it, more than the common routine of travelling, preaching, and meeting the classes. It was in this circuit, however, that my first wife lived, then fifteen years old, but looking younger than her age. And, although I entertained not the most distant idea of marriage, and she was by no means grown, I was conscious of an attachment to her which must have overcome my prudence (with her consent) had she been a little older. I say *prudence,*

for in those days of long rides and little quarterage, with no allowance for family expenses, it was deemed vastly imprudent for a young preacher to marry, should he even get an angel for his wife. Riding, and preaching, and meeting class, then, I went round the circuit till the second Quarterly Meeting, after such a common fashion as to furnish nothing for remark, except a dry story about a witch, and perhaps one about losing my suspenders. No, it was here that I learned by experience that it was improper for a preacher on such a circuit to prescribe to himself certain stated days weekly to be kept as fast-days. I had proposed to myself to observe strictly every Friday as a fast-day, eating nothing till near night, and every Wednesday as a day of abstinence, eating lightly only of vegetables. On one Wednesday I had to take this light breakfast of a bit of bread and a cup of coffee at the house of my well-remembered old friend, the Rev. Thomas Humphries, on Jeffers's creek, and ride twenty-two miles to preach and meet the class, and afterwards twelve miles farther to my stopping-place, without food. Thursday I rode not quite so far, preached and met class. And Friday, my absolute fast-day, I rode from fifteen to seventeen miles to my daily work, and fourteen miles afterwards. This was repeated but a few times before I became satisfied that it was wrong, and that the duty of fasting ceased to be a duty when one could not rest. I fear that I may have erred much oftener since on the other extreme,

and excused myself from fasting when it ought not to have been neglected. And I will venture the remark as a general one concerning this duty as observed by the Methodists then and now: if we were then too strict, have we not since become too lax?

But the story of the witch: I had preached and held class at the Gully, (I dare say the witches have all disappeared from there long ago,) and was come to a brother's house to pass the night, when I asked him who that singular-looking old lady was who sat just before the pulpit during class, and had not her name on the class-paper. "O," said he, "she is the old witch!" "Witch? And if she is a witch, why do you suffer her to stay in class?" "Suffer her! why, we are afraid of her, and if you knew how much mischief she had done, you would be afraid of her too." And he went on to tell of the poor women's cows she had shot with hair-balls, and how with a single hair-ball, or a great many of them fired at once, she had killed in a moment every fowl in the yard of some poor woman whom she had a grudge against. The story was long enough to allow me time to recollect myself, and I only answered that she must be too bad to stay in class, at any rate. On my next round, seeing the same person on the same seat, after preaching I repeated the rule, "At every other meeting of the class in every place, let no stranger be admitted;" and remarked that as no such restriction had been observed on my last round, I should observe it then.

No stranger, meaning no one not a member of the Church, could be allowed to stay in during the class-meeting which we were then going to hold, and that if there might be any one present who wished to join the Church, and so secure the right of being present at all our meetings, such person would please come forward and join the Church. The old woman looked as if she might have been struck with her hair-ball herself, and dropped her head, as if to conceal her face behind the frontispiece of her long black bonnet. "Ma'am," I asked her, "are you a member of our Church?" But she did not notice the question. "You, ma'am," I repeated, "are you a member of the Church? Please tell me, for if you are not, you have to join or go out." There was no mistaking as to who was meant, and she shook herself with a strange wriggling motion, not unlike a turkey in the sand, muttering something like boo, boo, boo, woo, woo, woo. "You won't be offended with me, ma'am, for I must do my duty, and if you won't go out I must lead you out." The wriggle seemed almost a spasm, and the boo, boo, woo, woo, rumbled in her throat as if she might be strangling. "Shall I have to lead you out, ma'am, and you a lady too?" Boo, boo, woo, woo, and up she got and was off, shaking and tossing herself, as she went, most ridiculously. But I had spoiled our class-meeting. The terror of her anger was upon us, and what would she not do, poor old woman? My good but weak brother told me that evening he

thought me very bold for such a young man. "Bold, because I would not let a poor befooled old woman scare me?" "But she was a witch!" "Then let her shoot my horse." "Ah," said he, "I don't know if you will ever get him round here again." "I dare say," said I, "she would kill him if she could, but she can't, and if she don't kill him she is no witch."

But about the suspenders: It was not far from the Gully (I think some eight or ten miles) that I lost my suspenders. And the way of it was this: Brother D., a weak but eminently pious man, had conducted me home with him from a very refreshing meeting; and having retired to a room for secret prayer, as he came out with a beaming countenance, exceeding happy, "O, Brother Capers," he exclaimed, "how I love you! I love to hear you preach, I love to hear you meet class, I love you anyhow, but O, them gallowses! Won't you pull them off?" "Pull them off, my brother, for what?" "O," said he, "they make you look so worldly; and I know you ain't worldly neither, but do pull them off." So I pulled them off, and it was several years before I put them on again.

At our second Quarterly Meeting, which was early in June, (1810,) I was removed from this circuit to the town of Fayetteville, North Carolina. The case was urgent, and my removal sudden; so that I went immediately after the Quarterly Meeting, and on the 13th day of the month was in my new charge. What had been my chief concern the year

before in Wateree Circuit, was now become a secondary matter, and not how to administer the Discipline, but how to serve the people from the pulpit, was now the point of principal importance. For the administration of Discipline, as it concerned my office as preacher in charge, the rules were few and plain; and if in any thing I might be doubtful, I was sure to have reliable advisers. But how was I to preach four sermons a week to the same congregation without repetition? And how could I expect to keep a congregation who should be served with repetitions of the same matter, which, at the first hearing, might be only tolerable? The first thing that struck me as necessary was, that I should keep strictly to the text, and never bring in matter which did not directly spring from it. There must be matter enough in any text I should take to make a sermon, and when I had delivered that, and such exhortation as it naturally furnished, I must be done. Then I must be always mindful that I had to preach, and conduct my reading and thinking so as to be on the alert to find preaching-matter. But still I found myself worried with the apprehension of repeating the same thing over again, as it seemed impossible to recollect at any one time all that I had been preaching previously. And it struck me that, like the promiscuous passing of carriages along a street where no one ever thinks of keeping or avoiding tracks, compared to the market roads, which, though less travelled, are much more rutted, I might probably gain my ob-

ject more easily by forgetting than by remembering previous discourses, if, indeed, I might gain it at all. And I determined to try, in addition to the two preceding rules, the effect it might have for me to put out the tracks as soon as I should make them, by not recollecting any thing I had preached, but preaching each time as if I had not done so before. I mention this, not to recommend it to others, but because of its influence over my own practice; and the more, as the rule adopted then has generally governed me since. But I am sure by experience that the third can only be allowable in connection with the first and second rule. For although while preaching was my sole business I never doubted that my plan was the best for *me*, I have not been so confident of it since I have been charged with other duties to a degree which has much diverted my attention from it. To be an off-at-hand preacher requires indispensably for one to keep his work always in mind, and so actively as to press into his service for the pulpit whatever may be desirable for it. And if one would have new matter in every discourse, he must look for it in what has come under his observation in books, in men, in every thing he has met with since he preached last. But, above all things else, it is by studying the Scriptures with an active preaching mind, that we may bring forth to effect things new and old in all our pulpit efforts.

For the performance of pastoral duty, I visited each family of my charge once a week, appropriat-

ing the time from 9 o'clock A. M. to 1 P M. for five days of the week to this purpose, and allowing a half-hour to each house I visited. The names of the families were appropriated to each day, and with which one to begin and end for the day, so that each family knew within a few minutes when to expect me. I considered these stated visits as so many appointments which I might not disappoint, and was seldom absent at the time when I was looked for.

In this pleasant town, with such people as the Blakes, Coburn, Lumsden, Saltonstall, McDonald, Thomas, Eccles, Price, and others, I was most agreeably situated. But what contributed most to my happiness as regards society, was the uncommon attachment to each other which subsisted between that most pure-hearted and intelligent man, the Rev. John H. Pearce, and myself. He was generally considered eccentric and enthusiastic. But I knew him as he knew himself, and I never discovered any eccentricity in him, but this: that, being a bachelor, he wore a coarse wool hat as long as he could keep it whole, brogan shoes, and clothes at the lowest price, that he might save every penny in his power for the poor; for whom, whoever they might be of virtuous reputation, he felt a more lively and intense sympathy than any other person whom I have ever known. He was enthusiastic, as a matter of course; for he loved the Lord his God with all his heart, and his neighbor as himself; which the world and half-fashioned Christians

have ever held to be the height of enthusiasm. I never found him wanting of a reason of the hope that was in him, nor of his conduct in any matter, which those who blamed his enthusiasm and eccentricity might answer from the Scriptures. Love seemed to be his universal element, gentleness and meekness the forms of its manifestation. He was originally from Rhode Island, had been well bred, and at this time had two brothers, Oliver and Nathanael, who occupied first places in the community as to wealth and worldly respects. John had been brought up to the profession of physic, embraced deism in his youth, and adopted the Epicurean morals; but he had now been for some years converted to God, and was such an example of unlimited self-devotion as I doubt if I have ever known exceeded, if equalled. And what made him particularly interesting to me was his continually happy spirit, which kept his countenance ever upward, ever bright. With him, it was impossible for me to suffer a moment's discouragement about any thing; and such was our mutual attachment, that we were never apart when it was consistent with duty for us to be together.

With such names as I have mentioned above, it should seem that there must have been abundant means for the support of the ministry. No doubt there was; and no doubt, too, that if the Church had been well organized as regards fiscal affairs, there would have been ample accommodations for the preacher, without having him to board

from house to house among his people. But the general policy of the Church was, to have an unmarried ministry to suit the long rides to the scattered appointments of circuits a hundred miles through; the towns were not yet considered as requiring any thing materially different from the circuits; and except the parsonage-house in Georgetown, built for Mr. Hammett and at his instance. and a poor hull of a house in Wilmington, built by Mr. Meredith for his use, the only parsonage-house in the three States of North and South Carolina and Georgia was in Charleston: that famous old yellow coop which stood in Bethel churchyard; in which, when that very great man, soul and body, Dr. Olin, was stationed there, he could not stand upright in his chamber. But why build parsonage-houses for single men, either in town or country? In the present case, it would have been regarded a downright evil; and the incumbent now to be provided for out of the question, there were too many homes for the preacher, and too much interest felt at each of them to have him there, for a thought to be entertained of building a preacher's-house. Were they not all his houses, and the best of their accommodations at his service? For the six months of my pastorate in Fayetteville, I lodged successively with brothers Price, Blake, Coburn, and Lumsden: four instead of one, (their places being convenient,) on the circuit principle of alternating with the people; because, if the preacher was a blessing, they should share it, and if a bur-

den, they should bear it among them severally. I was put under the kindest obligations to them, the remembrance of which is more than pleasant; particularly those most excellent men and their saintly wives, Isham Blake and John Coburn: fathers and mothers were they indeed to me.

But the most remarkable man in Fayetteville when I went there, and who died during my stay, was a negro, by the name of Henry Evans. I say *the most remarkable* in view of his class; and I call him *negro*, with unfeigned respect. He was a negro: that is, he was of that race, without any admixture of another. The name simply designates the race, and it is vulgar to regard it with opprobrium. I have known and loved and honored not a few negroes in my life, who were probably as pure of heart as Evans, or anybody else. Such were my old friends, Castile Selby and John Boquet, of Charleston, Will Campbell and Harry Myrick, of Wilmington, York Cohen, of Savannah, and others I might name. These I might call remarkable for their goodness. But I use the word in a broader sense for Henry Evans, who was confessedly the father of the Methodist Church, white and black, in Fayetteville, and the best preacher of his time in that quarter; and who was so *remarkable*, as to have become the greatest curiosity of the town; insomuch that distinguished visitors hardly felt that they might pass a Sunday in Fayetteville without hearing him preach. Evans was from Virginia; a shoemaker by trade, and, I think, was

born free. He became a Christian and a Methodist quite young, and was licensed to preach in Virginia. While yet a young man, he determined to remove to Charleston, S. C., thinking he might succeed best there at his trade. But having reached Fayetteville on his way to Charleston, and something detaining him for a few days, his spirit was stirred at perceiving that the people of his race in that town were wholly given to profanity and lewdness, never hearing preaching of any denomination, and living emphatically without hope and without God in the world. This determined him to stop in Fayetteville; and he began to preach to the negroes, with great effect. The town council interfered, and nothing in his power could prevail with them to permit him to preach. He then withdrew to the sand-hills, out of town, and held meetings in the woods, changing his appointments from place to place. No law was violated, while the council was effectually eluded; and so the opposition passed into the hands of the mob. These he worried out by changing his appointments, so that when they went to work their will upon him, he was preaching somewhere else. Meanwhile, whatever the most honest purpose of a simple heart could do to reconcile his enemies, was employed by him for that end. He eluded no one in private, but sought opportunities to explain himself; avowed the purity of his intentions; and even begged to be subjected to the scrutiny of any surveillance that might be thought proper to prove his inoffensiveness; any thing, so

that he might but be allowed to preach. Happily for him and the cause of religion, his honest countenance and earnest pleadings were soon powerfully seconded by the fruits of his labors. One after another began to suspect their servants of attending his preaching, not because they were made worse, but wonderfully better. The effect on the public morals of the negroes, too, began to be seen, particularly as regarded their habits on Sunday, and drunkenness. And it was not long before the mob was called off by a change in the current of opinion, and Evans was allowed to preach in town. At that time there was not a single church edifice in town, and but one congregation, (Presbyterian,) who worshipped in what was called the State-house, under which was the market; and it was plainly Evans or nobody to preach to the negroes. Now, too, of the mistresses there were not a few, and some masters, who were brought to think that the preaching which had proved so beneficial to their servants might be good for them also; and the famous negro preacher had some whites as well as blacks to hear him. Among others, and who were the first fruits, were my old friends, Mr. and Mrs. Lumsden, Mrs. Bowen, (for many years Preceptress of the Female Academy,) Mrs. Malsby, and, I think, Mr. and Mrs. Blake. From these the gracious influence spread to others, and a meeting-house was built. It was a frame of wood, weatherboarded only on the outside without plastering, about fifty feet long by thirty feet wide. Seats, distinctly

separated, were at first appropriated to the whites, near the pulpit. But Evans had already become famous, and these seats were insufficient. Indeed, the negroes seemed likely to lose their preacher, negro though he was, while the whites, crowded out of their appropriate seats, took possession of those in the rear. Meanwhile Evans had represented to the preacher of Bladen Circuit how things were going, and induced him to take his meeting-house into the circuit, and constitute a church there. And now, there was no longer room for the negroes in the house when Evans preached; and for the accommodation of both classes, the weather-boards were knocked off and sheds were added to the house on either side; the whites occupying the whole of the original building, and the negroes those sheds as a part of the same house. Evans's dwelling was a shed at the pulpit end of the church. And that was the identical state of the case when I was pastor. Often was I in that shed, and much to my edification. I have known not many preachers who appeared more conversant with Scripture than Evans, or whose conversation was more instructive as to the things of God. He seemed always deeply impressed with the responsibility of his position; and not even our old friend Castile was more remarkable for his humble and deferential deportment towards the whites than Evans was. Nor would he allow any partiality of his friends to induce him to vary in the least degree the line of conduct or the bearing which

he had prescribed to himself in this respect; never speaking to a white man but with his hat under his arm; never allowing himself to be seated in their houses; and even confining himself to the kind and manner of dress proper for negroes in general, except his plain black coat for the pulpit. "The whites are kind to me, and come to hear me preach," he would say, "but I belong to my own sort, and must not spoil them." And yet Henry Evans was a Boanerges; and in his duty feared not the face of man.

I have said that he died during my stay in Fayetteville this year, (1810.) The death of such a man could not but be triumphant, and his was distinguishingly so. I did not witness it, but was with him just before he died; and as he appeared to me, triumph should express but partially the character of his feelings, as the word imports exultation at a victory, or at most the victory and exultation together. It seemed to me as if the victory he had won was no longer an object, but rather as if his spirit, past the contemplation of triumphs on earth, were already in communion with heaven. Yet his last breath was drawn in the act of pronouncing 1 Cor. xv. 57: "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." It was my practice to hold a meeting with the blacks in the church directly after morning preaching every Sunday. And on the Sunday before his death, during this meeting, the little door between his humble shed and the chancel where I stood was

opened, and the dying man entered for a last farewell to his people. He was almost too feeble to stand at all, but supporting himself by the railing of the chancel, he said: "I have come to say my last word to you. It is this: None but Christ. Three times I have had my life in jeopardy for preaching the gospel to you. Three times I have broken the ice on the edge of the water and swum across the Cape Fear to preach the gospel to you. And now, if in my last hour I could trust to that, or to any thing else but Christ crucified, for my salvation, all should be lost, and my soul perish for ever." A noble testimony! Worthy, not of Evans only, but St. Paul. His funeral at the church was attended by a greater concourse of persons than had been seen on any funeral occasion before. The whole community appeared to mourn his death, and the universal feeling seemed to be that in honoring the memory of Henry Evans we were paying a tribute to virtue and religion. He was buried under the chancel of the church of which he had been in so remarkable a manner the founder.

Looking back on my past life, I know no single duty which I might suppose myself to have discharged in measure and manner as I ought to have done; and if some bright spots appear in the general shade, and there were instances of devotion seeming to answer somewhat to my obligations, they may not be relied on for my justification, but

show rather by contrast how much more has been neglected than discharged.

"Jesus, thy blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress."

I have often been struck with the force of that particular obligation which is stated in the office of the ordination of deacons: "And furthermore, it is his office to search for the sick, poor, and impotent, that they may be visited and relieved," and have felt painfully how deficient I have been, how much less than my duty I have done. The winter was coming on with uncommon severity, and brother Pearce, who seemed to live for the poor, suggested that we might do something in their behalf, several persons whom he knew being without sufficient clothing or blankets to keep them comfortable, or even more than preserve them from freezing in the coming cold weather. And it was agreed on between us that we would ask our friends for some trifle to assist us in this charity. I proposed to beg the money if he would appropriate it, but he would by no means take for his share of the service the luxury of applying what we might obtain, and so we went together both in the getting and the giving. The money in hand, what should we buy with it? And he advised to divide it equally to blankets and coarse woollens. These were purchased; and the next thing, of course, was to distribute them. They were large bundles, requiring the shoulder; especially the blankets;

and he shouldering the larger, showed me an example with respect to the smaller. I clutched it under my arm, and off we went. And why have I not since spent many such a happy day as that? I remember that at one place, the house of an approved sister, where we left a pair of large Duffel blankets and several yards of the woollen cloth, there was but one whole blanket in the house, which was employed as a wrapper for the poor man, who, after destroying himself by intemperance, had now been for several years hopelessly a paralytic, requiring more of his wife's attention than a child might; while for their subsistence, and that of two clever little boys of eight and ten years old, she took in washing, having to bring her fuel on her head, with the assistance of the little boys, a mile and a half from the woods. But how could a worthy member of the Church be suffered to endure such distressing poverty? I presume just because she was so worthy as to prefer suffering to complaining; and as she was always looking decent at church and at class, and those who should have relieved her (and would have done so had they known) were occupied with their own business, her wretchedness was not suspected. Brother Pearce himself had no idea of the extremity of the case, though often in the house, till that day. Yes, "*the sick, poor, and impotent*"—those very individuals of them who have most need of assistance and have the best claims for it—may live near by us and we do nothing for them, only because we do not

"*search*" for them, and they are backward to complain.

Few half years of my life have been spent more pleasantly or more profitably than the half year in Fayetteville. Alas, that I should have profited no more by the many that have passed on to the judgment since that time!

At the close of the year I attended Conference for the first time, (Dec. 22, 1810,) at Columbia, South Carolina. The sessions were held in the parlor of the Hon. (afterwards Governor) John Taylor, who being at Washington City, and the house unoccupied, most kindly gave the use of it for this purpose. In my day, therefore, the time has been when a gentleman's parlor was sufficient to accommodate a session of the South Carolina Conference; and that the time too when there was no other Conference south or south-west of it: no Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, nor Louisiana Conference; but all the travelling preachers south of the Cape Fear river belonged to this Conference. At this time we had seventy-four preachers belonging to the Conference, employed on thirty-nine circuits and stations, of which twenty-four belonged to South Carolina and that part of North Carolina lying south of Cape Fear and the head-waters of Yadkin; fourteen belonged to Georgia; and there were two preachers employed as missionaries in Alabama. The returns gave us seventeen thousand seven hundred and eighty-eight whites, and eight thousand two hundred and two colored mem-

bers of our communion; and in all the Conferences together, including Canada, there were six hundred and fifty preachers and one hundred and seventy-four thousand five hundred and sixty members. I was now admitted into full connection with the Conference and ordained deacon.

What most concerned me at this Conference was Bishop Asbury's appeal to the preachers to induce them to offer themselves for the work in the South-west, which lying beyond "the wilderness," (as the country from the Ocmulgee river to near the Alabama was called,) and yet another wilderness of the Chickasaw and Choctaw Indians beyond that, seemed as remote and inaccessible as California might seem at present. It was before the dawn of the day of steamboats, and not so much as a stagecoach or hack passed through the land. I was deeply exercised on this subject, and after passing a sleepless night, mostly on my knees, called on my faithful friend and foster-father, Gassaway, for counsel. He advised me to open my mind to the Bishop as freely as I had done to him, and leave it for his decision whether to go or not go. I did so without delay, and his decision was unhesitatingly against it. "Can't send you, Billy, sugar," said the apostolic man, tenderly embracing me; "you won't know how to take care of yourself." A very different appointment was before me, and I was sent to Charleston.

Perhaps we were rather cynical in those days; perhaps we are so still. Certainly we had no high

conceit of human nature in the mass; and we may not have held each other to be incorruptible. I believe our jealousy was a godly one, which, though sometimes unfortunate and even unwise, if not faulty, meant no evil; and that, on the whole, it was safer for the Church, though sometimes severe to individuals, than the absence of it might have been. Preachers (at least the younger ones) were not often together for a few days without giving each other a proof of love in some correction. It might be in their pronunciation of such or such a word, some article of dress, or the way the hair was combed; or it might be something more serious, touching their spirit or manners; so that we were always watching over each other, and, as I believe, for good. It was a delicate duty, but we deemed ourselves bound to the discharge of it, on the principle of helping each other, in view of our acknowledged imperfections, the sacredness of our work, and the confidential character of our relation to each other. But this good practice was liable to abuse by excess; and with minds unfortunately constituted, it sometimes led to unpleasant suspicions. And this was the more likely to be induced, since with all our readiness for correction, we studiously avoided any word of praise. There could be no danger of being too humble, we thought, though there might be of the opposite; and above all things we should avoid pride, as a preacher's greatest bane. And unfortunately for me during the first half of this year,

my respected senior took it into his head that I was so much endangered by the attentions of the people, it would require all his endeavors to keep me humble. We had at that time but two churches belonging to our Connection in Charleston. These were Cumberland Street and Bethel. Trinity as yet was not ours, but three preachers had been sent to the city, under a stipulation with the trustees of that church to take it into our circuit with the others; they managing things in their own way as regarded discipline and the collections, and engaging to pay the amount of the quarterage of one preacher, (eighty dollars,) without cost for board. And the failure of this experiment was so utter as to induce the trustees, at the expiration of the second quarter, to release themselves from their engagement, on the ground that the stipulated eighty dollars could not be raised. Our principal church was Cumberland Street, where we had half a houseful or more in the mornings, and more than the house could hold in the afternoons and evenings. Bethel was not so large a building, and, except in the mornings, was not so well attended; so that for the afternoons and evenings, whoever preached at Cumberland Street had twice as many hearers as the preacher at Bethel. Trinity, except in name, was out of the question: no congregations could be got there. But my appointments, for several months together, kept me to Bethel and Trinity for the afternoons and evenings, and Cumberland in the morning, with but

few exceptions. My name was second in the order of the minutes of Conference, but for official business the preacher in charge always passed me by and asked assistance of my colleague, who was no older than myself; and all for no purpose under heaven but to keep me humble. My excellent friend, the Rev. William M. Kennedy, was Presiding Elder, and I asked his attention to this matter. But he could only assure me that my senior wished me no harm, but did it only to prevent my being injured by what he called my popularity. But does he not degrade me? was a question not so easily answered as that of the reason of the course pursued. A slight change followed for a little while only, and then the former manner of rotation was renewed for the special benefit I should derive from it as a counterpoise to popularity. Happily for me, I believed that my senior colleague was honest-hearted, though in this case injudicious; and with the correction of what seemed to me an ill-judged degradation, all was in harmony and went on smoothly with us. During the many years which have since elapsed, he has abundantly proved his great worth as a man and minister, and I have always confided in him as a friend.

You need not be told here of the sad disabilities which our ministry had fallen under, before my time, in consequence of the action of the General Conference, instigated by Dr. Coke, with respect to slavery. At the time of our present date, (the first of my knowing any thing about it,) we lay

under the ban of suspicion as disorganizers who could not be trusted among the negroes without danger to the public peace, all along the wealthier portions of the low country from Cape Fear to the Savannah river. My information of those earlier times is to the effect that Methodism, on its first introduction into the low country of South Carolina, was as favorably received as anywhere else in the United States. If we take Charleston for an example, we shall find among the names of its first members, Joshua Wells, John Stoney, Francis Weston, Thomas Bennett, (father of the late Governor,) and others belonging to the best portion of the community, even as the world might judge. But before my time, we had become reduced to a condition of positive obscurity; and it might have been said to the brethren there, not only that "not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble were called," but that none were. And for the country, an anecdote or two may serve to illustrate the matter. Among the chief of our ministers of the first race was Reuben Ellis, and among the most wealthy and influential of the inhabitants of Cooper river, and second in either regard to but few men in the State, was Elias Ball, Esq. Mr. Ellis, travelling his district, called at Mr. Ball's, and was courteously entertained. And the conversation turning on the good that might result from preaching to the negroes, it was proposed to make an experiment that evening by collecting them in the spacious piazza attached

to Mr. Ball's mansion, for Mr. Ellis to preach to them. He preached accordingly; and Mr. Ball was so captivated with it, as to urge for another evening's service. And before Mr. Ellis left, he offered him a salary of six hundred dollars and his board to remain permanently as his chaplain, and to preach to his negroes every Sabbath day. This anecdote I got from my father, who got it from Mr. Ellis or Mr. Ball himself.

I cannot tell what may have carried Dr. Coke there, but on that very visit to America which proved so hurtful by the introduction of his abolition measures, he happened to visit Edisto Island, (the largest and wealthiest of our sea islands,) and preached. And such was the influence of his visit as to induce a petition for a preacher to be sent to the island. One was appointed accordingly, but before his arrival the storm from the North was upon us, and he found no place for the sole of his foot.

A singular state of things ensued. We had belonging to the Church in Charleston, (1811,) as if raised up for the exigences of the time, some extraordinary colored men. I have mentioned Castile Selby; there were also Amos Baxter, Tom Smith, Peter Simpson, Smart Simpson, Harry Bull, Richard Holloway, Alek Harlston, and others, men of intelligence and piety, who read the Scriptures and understood them, and were zealous for religion among the negroes. These were favorably known in the country places, on Goose creek,

Cooper river, Wando, St. Paul's Parish, St. James, St. John, and Wadmalaw Islands, and even as far as Pon-Pon river. I mean that in all these parts, some one of them was known and approved by some several of the planters, for whom they had been accustomed to do work, (one as a millwright, another as a carpenter or shoemaker,) or out of whose estates they had been liberated, or to whom or whose near friends they belonged. And while the white man, a citizen, born and bred on the soil, and even owning slaves, for being a Methodist preacher was excluded, as if by some sentence of outlawry, these colored men were permitted to hold meetings with the negroes pretty freely: as, for instance, Holloway on Goose creek, or Amos Baxter on Pon-Pon. And while they might receive any allowance at all on the part of the planters, or their meetings were only winked at, they received on our part the most hearty encouragement. Our plan was to recognize them as our agents. We authorized them to admit and exclude members; kept regular lists of their classes as belonging to our charge in Charleston; (for there was no other to which they could belong;) and they reported to us minutely on Monday what had been done on Sunday. They were the only persons who for Christ's sake were zealous enough to undertake such a service, and who, at the same time, could get access to the people that that service might be rendered. And I am satisfied that we did right to encourage them to the degree we did, notwith-

standing we could not exactly square it either by the statutes on the one hand, or the rules of Discipline on the other. We knew them to be good men; the work was one of the most sacred obligation to be done; and this was our only alternative. But how imperfect was such a half-fashioned expedient, in comparison to the regular missionary labors which have since been bestowed in the same quarters, under a better condition of things!

Under all the obloquy cast upon them, the Methodists were, nevertheless, much esteemed. But it seemed to be an esteem like that one might have for inferior animals which render service, rather than a recognition of their proper claims as a flock of Christ's own fold. Their preaching might be attended with great propriety, for almost everybody did so, but who might join them? No, it was vastly more respectable to join some other Church, and still attend the preaching of the Methodists, which was thought to answer all purposes. And this has been the case long since the year I am speaking of. The persons of that year whom I can call to mind have gone to their account; and yet I hesitate not to say that if all the individuals who have joined other Churches in that city since 1811, professing to have been awakened under the Methodist ministry, had joined the Church where God met them, the Methodist Church in Charleston might have ranked in worldly respects with the very first, before this day.

This year we commenced preaching in the poor-

house with good effect; and the practice was kept up for many years afterwards.

In September I attended a call to the country, which, by God's blessing, produced the nucleus of Cooper River Circuit. A Mr. Hale, living on the main road between Clemens's Ferry, (five miles above Charleston,) and Lenud's Ferry, on Santee, ten miles from the latter place, had represented the destitution of preaching in his neighborhood and that part of Santee, and requested that one of the preachers should visit them. The lot fell on me, and I found work for a week. The appointment was made for preaching at the house of the applicant on Sunday, at eleven o'clock in the morning. There was a large congregation for a thinly peopled country, who had not heard preaching of any denomination for many years before. After preaching I baptized a number of children; and the people still hanging on, as if reluctant to go away, I preached a second time. The text was Luke xix. 9, "This day is salvation come to this house." And although the people had been kept so long in attendance, and the men generally stood up for want of room or seats for sitting, their attention never flagged; so novel was the occasion, and so truly was there a gracious influence with them. In the midst of the second service, a daughter of Mr. Hale cried out and sank to the floor. It produced but a momentary pause, and she being taken into the next room, I proceeded with my discourse, after remarking that it was not so surprising that one

who had suddenly come to the knowledge of her condition as a sinner should be overpowered by it, as that so many who could not believe themselves to be in a safe state should be unconcerned about it. I took it to be an instance of the literal fulfilment of the text in the case of the young lady; who, I did not doubt, would be enabled to confirm what I said, when I should visit them again. At the close of the service, I appointed to preach on the following Friday evening at the same place, and made an appointment for Tuesday at a Mr. Compton's, near Lenud's Ferry. At Compton's, too, there was a full attendance, and an encouraging prospect. Returning to Hale's, I found the new convert exceeding happy in the love of God, and the rest of the family anxiously inquiring what they must do to be saved. Nor was the work confined to them only; but their neighbors hearing that the preacher's prophecy had come to pass, (which was no prophecy at all, but spoken on the evidence of numerous examples,) they were flocking to see for themselves what had taken place. A class was formed, and the next year my brother John was sent to form the Cooper River Circuit.

I might mention other incidents of this year which were deeply interesting to myself at the time. But as both they and their consequences have passed away, and they might illustrate nothing of any value, I pass them by. The year wound up pleasantly. We returned two hundred and eighty-two whites and three thousand one hun-

dred and twenty-eight colored members to the Conference; and left the Church enjoying great internal peace, and, indeed, prosperity.

The Conference was held at Camden, December 21, 1811. It was attended by Bishop Asbury, alone. The Conference session was on the whole a pleasant one; the preachers in the spirit of their work, and eminently in the spirit of love.

There was one case in the course of the examination of candidates for full connection and deacons' orders, which so remarkably illustrates the economy of those times in relation to the marriage of young preachers, (or I should rather say the severity of the Conferences on that subject, owing to what was conceived to be the necessity of having them unmarried,) that I will relate it. A. G. had travelled two years, and both of them as the helper of the excellent Gassaway, and was eligible to admission and election. No one of his class stood fairer than he for piety, zeal, diligence in duty, and usefulness as a preacher. Not the shadow of an objection was there against him but that he had married a wife; who was in all respects a suitable person, and of an excellent family. And yet for this sole reason he was neither admitted into full connection nor elected deacon. Brother Gassaway urged with great force the authority of 1 Timothy iii. 12. But brother Myers's speech carried it against him; the main point of which was presented thus: "A young man comes to us and says he is called to preach. We answer,

'I don't know.' He comes a second time, perhaps a third time, even a fourth time, saying, 'A dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me, and woe be to me if I preach not the gospel.' Then we say to him, 'Go and try.' He goes and tries, and can hardly do it. We bear with him a little while, and he does better. And just as we begin to hope he may make a preacher, lo, he comes again to us, and says, 'I must marry.' We say to him, 'If you marry, you will soon locate: go and preach.' 'No, I must marry, I *must* marry.' We say to him, 'A dispensation of the gospel is committed to you, and woe be unto you if you preach not the gospel.' 'But no,' he says, 'I *must marry*.' And he marries. It is enough to make an angel weep!" It will naturally be supposed that brother Myers was a single man; and his speech may indicate the controlling reason why he was single: he connected marriage inseparably with location; or, in other words, a carrying of the question, as one between preaching and marrying, against one's conviction of his duty to preach. The evil which required a remedy was not that the preachers took wives, but the unprovided condition of the circuits; which, without parsonage-houses, or means or disposition to rent houses for the preachers, and without a penny's worth allowed for the support of families, devolved on married preachers the unreasonable expense of subsisting their families by their own means; and these proving insufficient for the purpose without their personal labor, obliged them to desist from

travelling. And what did it profit the itinerancy to bear hardly on the junior preachers for marrying, when, in most cases, it was only to suspend for a few years the coming location? Or how much less cause might there be to make "an angel weep," when, for marrying after five or six years in the work, an able minister was driven to locate for want of subsistence for his family, than there was in his doing the same thing for the same cause before he had become so useful?

My appointment for 1812 was to Orangeburg Circuit; the upper division of what had been called Edisto Circuit, and which was now divided into Salkahatchie and Orangeburg Circuits. It consisted of thirteen appointments, and was travelled in two weeks; including the fork of Edisto for some twenty miles upward, and the societies between the north fork of that river and Beaver creek, and thence downward in the direction of the present State road to a point opposite to the village of Orangeburg, and thence to the village. A pleasant circuit it was, and a desirable appointment; but I was not permitted to go so immediately to it as to my former appointments. At this Conference I was required to act as assistant secretary, brother Kennedy being the Secretary. And the day after the session closed, when he would have furnished the Bishop with the papers necessary for publishing the minutes, that very important one, the returns of the numbers in society, could not be found. I was directed therefore to make

haste back to Camden, (for we were then at Rembert's,) and search the Conference room for it; and if I could not find it there, to pursue after either of the preachers who might have taken a copy, and meet the Bishop at such a time, at such a place, with the lost paper, or a copy, as the case might be. How could such a paper have been lost? I was involved in the fault; and that, too, on the first occasion of such a service. My horse was a good one, the best I have ever had; and I went after the lost paper, (which at last proved not to have been lost,) as if to recover it had been a matter of the last importance. It was not in the Conference room; but some one had seen a brother who was sent to the extreme corner of the Conference district taking a copy of it; and off I went for Buncombe county, North Carolina. The weather was of the worst, and exceeding cold, and my brother had nearly two days start of me; but on the fourth day I had overtaken him, got what he had of the lost numbers, and was on my way back. But so hard a ride through wet and freezing weather, and without sufficient clothing, had well-nigh knocked me up, so that I had to lose as much time as my rapid travelling had gained, (two days,) to relieve myself of a fever and incessant cough. Still there was time for me to meet the Bishop as he had appointed; and I was off again to do so. I have never been on any errand, nor engaged on any other business, which absorbed my attention more intensely than the present. I had thought of no-

thing else. So that when I discovered that to meet the Bishop's appointment must almost necessarily carry me to the house of the little girl whose loveliness had so enraptured me two years before, and who might now be grown up, it seemed a coincidence too strange to have been brought about by accident. If I had thought of it, I might have arranged, to be sure, for the same coincidence. But I had not thought of it. No idea of the sort had entered my mind, till I found myself calculating distances and stages on this renewal of my journey, and found, as by chance, that my second night must be passed at the house of my old friend Richard Green, Esq., of Black River, in Georgetown District, whose stepdaughter Anna White was. I saw her, I loved her with an all-pervading passion, and she consented to become my wife. Nor did I delay my journey; but met the Bishop, (who found the lost paper within an hour after I left him,) and was dismissed for my circuit with his blessing. Another evening on my way with her who was become, as by magic, the soul of my soul, and life of my life, and I was off for my circuit. I could not, however, reach there so soon. Snows (for whatever reason) were more frequent then than latterly in South Carolina; and since the two days' confinement at my father's, by cold, I had had another day's ride in the snow, so that a week was lost, as those two days had been, on my way to the Orangeburg Circuit.

The first quarter passed off exceeding well, and, indeed, for all the time of my labors in this circuit I might say the same, but for an unfortunate involvement at the Quarterly Conference closing the first quarter. Among the last acts of my predecessor before leaving the circuit, and after the fourth Quarterly Meeting had been held, was a trial, involving great general interest, of a highly respectable member of the Church at a place then called Zeigler's, on an allegation brought by another belonging to the society at Tabernacle. These were the two most numerous and important societies in the circuit, Tabernacle being the first, and this affair had involved connections on either side, so that it had become little less than a general disturbance between the societies as well as an altercation between the individuals. On that first investigation it had been given against the member at Zeigler's, and he appealed to the Quarterly Conference. This Quarterly Conference was the first in my year. The appeal consumed much time, the case being somewhat intricate, and the witnesses, pro and con, not a few. A sort of summing up of the testimony was called for, and the Presiding Elder, declining it himself, asked it of me. I ought not to have attempted it, but his suggestion seemed to be approved, and for the sole reason of obliging my senior I did attempt it. This involved me in the censure of those who were on the side of the accuser, and in whose judgment the evidence on the other side deserved no consideration; and,

notwithstanding the Presiding Elder's opinion that I had been impartial and rehearsed fully the whole case, I had to suffer a little for it. In the order of my round I came first to Zeigler's, next to Wannamaker's, (now called Prospect, I think,) and then to Tabernacle; and at Zeigler's I got a note from brother O. R., of the adjoining circuit, (Congaree,) informing me that such and such principal men belonging to Tabernacle had waited on him in behalf of the society, requesting him to take their church into his circuit, for the reason that the people of Tabernacle would no longer attend my ministry. And the reason of this reason was that, on the hearing of the appeal at the Quarterly Conference, I had given such a one-sided and perverted view of it as proved that the defendant's pretty sister had more influence with me than my conscience. And my good brother and co-laborer was so considerate as to advise me not to suffer any personal feelings to weigh with me to the loss of souls. Of course I would not; and only answered him that we had no authority, even at the instigation of the people, to transfer appointments from circuit to circuit; that I would not vindicate myself in the matter complained of, nor acknowledge any fault, being conscious of none; but that he might preach at Tabernacle in my place until my Presiding Elder, who was gone or about going to the General Conference, should return and see to it. Two days after, I attended in course on the forbidden ground, and had very few to hear me.

Them I told that I should not return there for some time, but that in the meanwhile brother R., of the Congaree Circuit, would preach in my stead. And I gave out his appointment for a certain day. But on my second round of two weeks each, how great was my surprise at seeing in my congregation at Wannamaker's the very men who had been to brother R. to induce him to take their society in his circuit, and become their pastor on the ground of my unworthiness; and still more, to learn from them that their object in coming was to induce me to return to them as at first. Was it to add insult to injury that they did this? By no means, they assured me; but because they were convinced that they had done very wrong, and everybody knew it. It appeared that a sudden and great revulsion had taken place by means of an eminently pious old sister. It is a curious story, and I will relate it: Brother R. had preached his first sermon, and was meeting class, when, calling the name of this particular sister, and asking her how her soul prospered, she answered that it had never been worse with her than it then was, and she expected it to be no better while he continued to preach there. She did not wish to offend him, but he was not her preacher. "When," continued she, "I first joined the Church, it distressed me very much that the preacher had to go away, and he told me that if I would set apart a day for prayer and fasting, and would pray for it daily during Conference, the Lord would send me a preacher

who should be to me the same as he had been. I did as he told me to do, and the Lord sent me a preacher. And I have been doing so ever since, and the Lord has always sent me a preacher. I did so this year, and the Lord sent me brother Capers, just as he had sent the rest; but I don't know, brother, who sent you. One thing I know, you are not my preacher. You belong to the Congaree people for this year, and brother Capers is our preacher." And so, "for the divisions of Reuben there were great searchings of heart." They knew not my secret, or they had spared themselves.

But to return to the brethren who had met me at Wannamaker's. I would not consent to resume my appointments at Tabernacle without seeing for myself that justice had been done me with the community; but I did consent that they might make an appointment for preaching there of an evening on my next round, when I would decide what to do. At the time, I had a large congregation; and the late malcontents seemed to vie with those who had been most grieved on my account, in their attentions to me. I resumed my appointments: Tabernacle, as at first, continued the head of the circuit; and I might have forgiven the wrong, if only for the evidence it furnished, that travelling preachers might not be less liable to difficulties for being unmarried.

On this circuit I had every thing which a preacher might desire for contentment. There was work

enough, and my appointments well attended; at almost every place I had affectionate Christian friends, whose worth I was prepared to estimate, and whom I loved sincerely; with one slight exception, my health was excellent; and, above all, my labors were not in vain. What gave me most concern, was an habitual unbelief as to my Christian experience. Not that I ever doubted the genuineness of my conversion, and that I had received the witness of the Spirit at the time before given; nor that I had again and again, on a great many occasions, enjoyed manifestations of the grace of God, as revealed in the gospel; but the question of perplexity was as to the character of that state in which I frequently found myself, when I might not be able to assure myself that all was well, for want of some special manifestation to assure me. It was not a question of the past, but of the present time; and of the present, not as it might be connected with the past, but as in itself it stood related to the future judgment for my justification or the reverse. Was I not "every moment pleasing or displeasing to God?" And if so, what was the character of my state at those moments, hours, or days, in which I felt not assured by its separate experience of my being at that time a child of God? Such questions I was apt to examine in a light too strictly legal; or else with an undue regard to emotions, rather than to principles and motives; and hence I was still liable to the pain of what I have called an habitual unbelief as to my Christian state. I could

not be satisfied with myself, not only as it regards a comparison of what one is to what one might be, but of what one is to what one has been, in respect of a feeling of assurance. It was in this frame of mind that I went to a camp-meeting, about midsummer, on Four Holes, just above the bridge on the old Orangeburg road; deeply impressed with my want of holiness, both for my own happiness, and that my ministry might be profitable to the people. This meeting was one of the very best. At first I proposed to myself not to be active in it, but to give myself as much as possible to retirement and prayer, after hearing the sermons from time to time. On this plan I passed several days uncomfortably; and instead of more light and love, found my mind more and more perplexed. I saw my error, and corrected it by going earnestly to work for others; and was much relieved, though still unsatisfied. The meeting closed, and left me to return to my circuit, lacking in faith, in love, in the assurance of the Holy Spirit, and not, as I had hoped, strong and exultant. I had never since my conversion felt more dissatisfied with myself than I did as, riding pensively along the road to my circuit, I reviewed the history, both of the meeting, and of my purposes and feelings in going to it and during its continuance: how much I had needed; how little I had obtained: with what strong desire I had anticipated it, as a time of extraordinary blessing, and to what little purpose it had been improved. Should I return to the labors of my

circuit still unrefreshed, like Gideon's fleece, dry in the midst of the dew of heaven? Why was it so? Had I made an idol of the camp-meeting, trusting to means of any sort in place of the all-quickening Spirit? And I turned aside into a thick wood, saying to myself, There is none here but God only, and I cannot thus uncomfortable go back to my circuit; I will even go to Him alone who has all power in heaven and earth, and who has called the heavy-laden unto him that they may find rest. Jesus, Master, heal my blindness! Give me faith and love! I still remember how, as I hitched my horse, I felt to pity him for the long fast he should have to keep before he might be unloosed. But it was not so. I had scarcely fallen on my knees, with my face to the ground, before Heb. xii. 18, 19, 22, 23, 24, was applied with power to my mind: "For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words.
But ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the General Assembly and Church of the first-born which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel." In that moment how spiritual seemed religion, how intimate the connec-

tion between earth and heaven, grace and glory, the Church militant and the Church triumphant! And it seemed to challenge my consent to leave the one for the other; as if it had been proposed to me, Would you give up all who are below for those who are above, and count it now a high privilege to have come literally and absolutely to mingle with the innumerable company of angels, and spirits of just men made perfect, in the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God? And instinct said no, and all the loved ones on earth seemed to say no; but the words sounded to my heart above the voice of earth and instinct, "*Ye are come!*" and my spirit caught the transport, and echoed back to heaven, "*Ye are come!*" In that moment I felt, as can only be felt, "the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." I returned to my circuit with my strength renewed as the eagle's, full of faith and comfort. Nevertheless, I did not perceive that increase of power attending my preaching which my former views of the reason of my lack of success had induced me to expect. Things went on much as before: sinners remained sinners still, and backsliders were backsliders still. Our class-meetings only, seemed to have much improved. Idolatry in its most subtle forms is but idolatry; and I had to learn what St. Peter meant (Acts iii. 12) by saying, "Why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?" The miracle had been

wrought by the power of God; and on the part of the apostle, simple faith, which looked away from all within himself to Christ, was the instrument of taking hold on that power which Christ alone could exercise, for the accomplishment of a Divine work. This faith was not holiness, nor was Peter's holiness that faith. True, such a faith might not be exercised by an unholy man; but still it was not holiness, but simply faith. And it would not be his holiness which had been the instrument of a Divine work, because the holiness was his, substantively; a possession of grace which God had given him, and which the Spirit of God kept whole in him, but which, nevertheless, was distinctively Peter's holiness. It was not because Peter was so holy a man, but simply because he believed in Christ, who had called him to the apostleship, that the lame man was healed. The difference is as to the object of each: the holiness of Peter directing attention to him as a man sufficiently well qualified; while his faith points wholly to the Saviour as the only and all-sufficient operator. For nothing that Peter was, but for what Christ was, the miracle had been wrought; Peter simply apprehending the power and compassion of his Lord, and speaking the word as from his own lips, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk."

I make these remarks on a point which was of some consequence to myself at least; not as undervaluing holiness—far from it—but as indicating the source of all the perplexities of the past time.

First, I could do no good because I was doubtful of being called to preach. Then I could do almost none at all, because I was so deficient as to Christian experience. When in heaviness through manifold temptations, it had seemed presumptuous to preach; and when satisfied of my personal justification, it was not much better, by reason of my lacking holiness. And now that I was enabled to "rejoice evermore," I might not give it a name, because the proof was not sufficient to sustain the name in my still scanty success. Nor was this all: I might not look for fruit now; for if I should have any great success, it might betray me into self-confidence, as if it resulted naturally from my improved spiritual condition, and was not, as it needs must be, the work of God only. So true is it, that much light does not imply much love, nor much love much light; and that in any state we may expect temptation. Or, if it should be thought that these discouragements of mine, first and last, were only proofs of immaturity, it must be confessed that riper minds have had their questions too. How comes it that X. should be distinguished among his brethren as a revivalist, when perhaps he exhibits no evidence of greater piety than the rest, or is even less sanctified than most of them are? It may not be on account of his eloquence; for he may not be an eloquent man; and if he is, eloquence is manifestly incompetent to the work. But we may perceive that whoever he is, and whatever his accomplishments may be, he is sure to aim

simply at his object. "He goes for getting people converted." And what he "goes for" he is apt to succeed at, because he believes the gospel can convert them, and will do it. And does it require much depth of piety to believe this? Is it wonderful that even an imperfect believer, in view of the whole compass of revealed truth, should believe as much? But he believes also that it will be done at the time present. And why not at the present time, if at all? "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." But so before the dispensation of the Spirit had been fully given, or Jesus glorified, when he taught his disciples (Luke xvii. 3) that they must forgive all trespasses, and to any number of times, they exclaimed, "Lord, increase our faith!" as if they might not have faith enough for that; though when he had sent them to "heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, and cast out devils," they made no difficulty about it, but went straight to do as they had been bid, and did it. Have what else we may, or may not have, we must have faith that we may do any thing in the name of Christ; and faith with respect to that very thing which is proposed to be done, that he will do it, and at that very time. Nor would I say that good cannot be done by means of a preacher who has not faith, when on the part of the hearer there exist right dispositions, and he is shut up to the necessity of hearing him or none. I could not say so, but I could say that it is not God's method to carry on his work by such men.

The old Jews might find it profitable to attend the teaching of the Scribes who sat in Moses' seat; the goodness of the truths taught countervailing the unworthiness of the persons teaching; but God's purpose was to have better men to teach his word. The exception is not the rule. Nor, indeed, is this the question, which looks not to a possibility of profit to well-disposed minds waiting to be fed by the word, but to those who may not be so well-disposed, and with respect to whom the gospel is to operate in its aggressive character. It is a question as to how a preacher should preach so as to turn sinners to God; and my answer is, that believing himself to be called to that work, he should believe that God will work by him, and work now, and preach as if he believed it.

I was not permitted to continue to the end of the year in this pleasant circuit, but was called to the bedside of my father in the month of September, to whom afterwards my duty became due till his death. This event, which filled me with extreme sorrow, was quickly followed by a sore trial. I had entered into an engagement of marriage, with a purpose of locating at the approaching Conference, and the time subsequently fixed for the nuptials was the 13th of January ensuing. But the reasons for my locating had been entirely removed by my father's death, so that I could not do so and be clear in my conscience. Might I, then, locate on the ground of having formed that engagement? And if not, was there any probability

of marrying at all? Could I hope that my betrothed would marry a travelling preacher, as the itinerancy was then circumstanced? Locate I could not. Nothing had been stipulated as to location, and any allusion to it had been made with reference to that one only cause, which existed no longer. But could I, at almost the very period of marrying my first love, for whom I felt an affection as intense and exclusive as nature knows, could I jeopard all by a new condition, and one, too, so exceeding hard as the present was? The interval between the death of my father and the session of Conference allowed of but a brief visit on my way to the Conference. Conscience had triumphed; but terrible was the suspense till I might know what that triumph was to cost me. The cost, however, I found to be no more than a smile of sweet approval.

Conference was held in Charleston late in the month of December. At this I was ordained elder, by Bishop McKendree, in Bethel church, Sunday, December 26th, 1812, having completed four years from the time of my admission on trial. My appointment was fixed for Wilmington, North Carolina. At the appointed time, (Thursday evening, January 13th, 1813,) I was married to Miss Anna White, daughter of John White, Esq., (deceased,) of Georgetown District; and on the following Monday we set out for Wilmington, and reached it on Friday the 21st. We had been there but a week or two when we had the honor of entertaining Bishop Asbury and his excellent attendant, brother Boehm, who passed

a Sabbath in Wilmington. These were our first guests in our first dwelling-place, the parsonage, which I might call either a two-story dwelling-house, or a shanty, according to my humor. It was a two-story house, actually erected in that form, and no mistake, with its first story eight feet high, and the second between six and seven; quite high enough for a man to stand in it with his hat off, as men always ought to stand when in a house. The stories, to be sure, were not excessive as to length and breadth any more than height; each story constituting a room of some eighteen feet by twelve or fourteen, and the upper one having the benefit of a sort of step-ladder on the outside of the edifice, to render it accessible when it might not rain too hard, or with an umbrella when it did rain, if the wind did not blow too hard. And besides this, there was a room constructed by a shed at one side of the main building, which, as madam might not relish going out of doors and up a step-ladder on her way to bed, especially in rainy weather, was appropriated to her use as a bed-chamber. But we were content. A palace might scarcely have been appreciated by us, who, by the grace of God, had in ourselves and each other a sufficiency for happiness. This house, the church, (a coarse wooden structure, of some sixty feet by forty,) the lots they stood on, and several adjoining lots, rented to free negroes, had belonged to Mr. Meredith, and had been procured, for the most part, by means of penny collections among the negroes,

who almost exclusively had composed his congregation. He had been a Wesleyan missionary to the negroes of one of the West India Islands, I think Jamaica or St. Kit's. And after Mr. Hammett came over to Charleston, and had got under way in his enterprise of establishing a pure Wesleyan Church, in opposition to the Asburyan, as he called it, he induced Mr. Meredith to come over also and join him. But he was not long satisfied with Mr. Hammett, whose influence over him was sufficient to prevent him from joining the Methodist Episcopal Church, but could not retain him among the "Primitive Methodists," as Mr. Hammett called his followers. And so, parting with Mr. Hammett, he came to Wilmington, and began preaching to the negroes. Here his history was very like that of the colored man, Henry Evans, at Fayetteville. He was subjected to all manner of annoyances, and even injuries, which he bore with unresisting meekness till he had worn his persecutors out. At one time he was put in jail, and he obliged them to let him out by preaching through the grates of his window to whoever might be in the street below. And when, after several years, things becoming more quiet, he ventured to build a meeting-house, it was burned to the ground. At last, however, Mr. Meredith gained the public confidence, and at his death willed in fee simple to Bishop Asbury a second meeting-house built on the site of the first, the parsonage-house above described, and the lands belonging to them; all which, of course, the

Bishop turned over to the Church; which, along with the property, acquired also the congregation and communicant members.

This case of the labors and persecutions of Mr. Meredith in Wilmington, like that of Henry Evans in Fayetteville, illustrates as strikingly as any thing else might which has occurred in our country, how sadly the spiritual wants of the negroes had been overlooked in early times. A numerous population of this class in that town and vicinity were as destitute of any public instruction, (or, probably, instruction of any kind as to spiritual things,) as if they had not been believed to be men at all, and their morals were as depraved as, with such a destitution of the gospel among them, might have been expected; and yet it seems not to have been considered that such a state of things might furnish motives sufficient to induce pure-minded men to engage, at great inconvenience and even personal hazard, in the work of reforming them. Such a work, on the other hand, seems to have been regarded unnecessary, if not unreasonable. Conscience was not believed to be concerned in it. And, unhappily, that fatal action of our General Conference, by which it had assumed the right of interfering, at least by memorial and remonstrance to the Legislatures, with the civil condition of the negroes, had aroused apprehension for the public safety. The opposition to Mr. Meredith is not, therefore, to be wondered at, though deeply to be regretted; and the fact that it ceased when the pub-

lic mind had become satisfied of the harmlessness of his labors, shows that it did not proceed from any worse motive than an apprehension of evil.

At the time of my going to Wilmington, Mr. Meredith's church and people had been transferred to Mr. Asbury's care, and incorporated with the Methodist Episcopal Church as a portion of it. Nevertheless, the offence of the cross had not ceased. It seemed to be admitted on all hands that the Methodists were, on the whole, a good sort of enthusiasts, and their religion very well suited to the lower classes, who needed to be kept constantly in terror of hell-fire. For the negroes, in particular, it was deemed most excellent. For as it was looked upon as substituting passion for principle, and feeling for the law of God, yet so as to make its passion a religious one, and its feeling a matter of conscience, and both to be in a ferment of zeal against all manner of sin, it was thought exactly to suit those whose passions were the strongest and their understanding weakest. The negro church, or meeting-house, was a common appellative for this Methodist church long after it had been occupied by whites on the lower floor, with the negroes in the galleries. And it was so in my day. But notwithstanding all this, gentlemen and ladies, of high position in society, were to be found from Sabbath to Sabbath attending our preaching. Could it have been that they wanted to participate in the Methodist religion of passion without principle? Or was it that their superior

sort of religion having taught them to condescend to men of low estate, they were only practicing the principle of humility? However it may have been with them, the sermons they heard for the whole year from my pulpit were taken up in stating, proving, and urging justification by faith, and its cognate doctrines of original depravity, regeneration, and the witness of the Spirit. These themes appeared inexhaustible to the preacher, and this portion of his hearers never grew less for his dwelling on them, though they wondered how such things could possibly be true. It cost them, however, some disquietude, of which you may take the following for a sample: Mrs. G., of the first class of the upper sort, had become so much interested in what she had heard, as to seek a conversation with me under cover of a call on Mrs. Capers; and Mrs. W., her sister, deemed it prudent to accompany her, for the reason, I suppose, that she (Mrs. W.) held her understanding to be better than her sister's, and that she was better established in the old creed. The conversation, therefore, was conducted, for the most part, by Mrs. W., who thought it impossible for me actually to mean that common people could know their sins forgiven since the apostles' day. Statement after statement was made on my part, and passage upon passage quoted from the Scriptures, while she continued to reply almost in the very words of Nicodemus, "How can these things be?" Mrs. G., meanwhile, was showing pretty unmistakable symptoms of un-

easiness, as if she apprehended that their unbelief might not be sufficient to "make the faith of God without effect," when, as a last resort, Mrs. W., turning to Mrs. Capers, said, "Well, Mrs. Capers, it must be a very high state of grace this which your husband talks about, and I dare say some very saintly persons may have experienced it, but as for us, it must be quite above our reach. I am sure you do not profess it, do you?" Mrs. C. blushed deeply, and replied in a soft but firm tone of voice, "Yes, ma'am, I experienced it at Rembert's camp-meeting, year before last, and by the grace of God I still have the witness of it." And I will add, that if Mrs. W felt discomfited, Mrs. G. lost not the benefit of that interview, but obtained the same grace, and died not long afterwards in the peace and comfort which it inspires.

In addition to my work in Wilmington, and as a part of my pastoral charge, there was a meeting-house on the Sound, across the neck of land between Cape Fear and the sea, eight miles from town, which I preached at on Wednesdays. It was a cabin of pine poles notched into each other, which that saintly young minister, Richmond Nolley, had built, mostly with his own hands, when stationed at Wilmington, for the use (if they would use it) and benefit (if they would be benefited by it) of the lowest and laziest set of white people that it has been my fortune to fall in with. They had come from nobody knew where, and squatted in little huts about the margin of the

Sound, (on lands which I suppose no one cared to pay taxes for, and not an acre of which they meant to cultivate,) for the benefit of living without labor, or as nearly so as possible. And their mode of subsistence was by catching fish, which they took with a seine once or twice a week, and taking them to market, purchased, by the sale of them, bacon, meal, and whisky, or rather, whisky, meal, and bacon. I generally found them, if I found them at all, basking in the sun, or lounging in the shade; and such as I could induce to go with me to the meeting-house constituted my congregations. I could do nothing for them; but though I still eked out the time of serving them, I did not return them to the Conference as belonging to our charge.

Such were the extremes of character and condition with which I had to do. Of my flock in town, while much the greater number were negroes, the whites were very poor, or barely able to support themselves with decency. Here, too, none of the wise men after the flesh, nor mighty, nor noble were called. Indeed, of the men of this class, I know not that there was one, and believe that if one, there was but one, who belonged to any Church at all as a communicant. They were, very generally at least, too much tinctured with the French deistical philosophy for that. Of churches in the town, claiming for mine to be one, there was but one other, the Protestant Episcopal Church, of which the Rev. Adam Empie was rector. Com-

paring numbers between the churches as to white members communing in each. I had the advantage of Mr. (since Dr.) Empie; having some ten or a dozen males to his doubtful *one*, while the females may have been about equally divided as to numbers; giving him, however, and his Church, the prestige of worldly wealth and honor. For support, as far as any was to be had, I was dependent mainly on my colored charge, whose class collections, added to the collection which was made in the congregation weekly, may have produced six or seven dollars a week for all purposes. I had not expected such a deficiency, and was not provided against it; and before I could command means from home, my very last penny was expended. What small things may prove important to us, and incidents of little moment in themselves, interest us deeply by their connections. Here was one. It happened that I had carried to market and expended for a fish, (because it was the cheapest food,) the last penny I possessed. And this was on the morning of the day when I should expect the Presiding Elder on his first quarterly round; and that Presiding Elder was Daniel Asbury, who had sustained the same relation to me during my first two years, and was beloved and honored next to brother Gassaway. And there was no place for him but the parsonage; or if there was for himself, there was not for his horse. In such circumstances nothing might seem easier than to meet the emergency by borrowing. But should I go to a bank

to borrow so little as a dollar or two? And of my flock I feared to ask a loan of so *much*, lest it should be more than my brother could spare, and for the pain it should give him should he not be able to oblige me in so small a matter and so great a need; and as the least of the evils before me, I concluded to await my friend's coming, and borrow from himself what might be needed during his stay. He came in time for a share of the fish at dinner, but before it had been produced paid me two hundred dollars which had been sent, very unexpectedly, by him for my use. If it had been but two dollars, I cannot tell the value I should have put upon it; but to receive two hundred dollars just at that juncture, made me rich indeed.

In the month of June I suffered an extreme illness of bilious fever, insomuch that my life was well-nigh despaired of; and as soon as I could get into a carriage and ride to the wharf, my physician sent me to Smithville to facilitate convalescence. You will remember that this was during the war with Great Britain; and a few days after we had arrived at Smithville, the news was brought of the enemy having landed at Ocracock and perpetrated many outrages. The facts truly stated were bad enough to excite alarm, as we had reason to expect that Wilmington would be the next point of attack; or Smithville rather, on the way to Wilmington; but as the story was told with great exaggerations, nothing might be more terrifying than this intelligence was. We therefore

took the first packet for our return to Wilmington, intending to place Mrs. Capers for safety with our friends, Francis A. Allston and sisters, on Town creek, ten miles off from Wilmington, and nearly as far from the Cape Fear river. Having done this, my purpose was to return immediately to Wilmington, to meet with my people whatever might come. No time was lost in the execution of my plan as far as respected Mrs. Capers; but the weather was wet, and the night of our arrival at brother Allston's, the next day, and following night, gave us such a flood of rain as had not been known for several years. On the second day I set out for Wilmington, and getting to the South Ferry, learned that the freshet had carried away so much of the causeway between that place and town, that a horse could not be got over it, and the only practicable way of going would be on foot. The distance to the North Ferry (at town) was two miles, all under water, and much of it knee-deep, or more, besides the liability of falling between the loosened or removed puncheons, and getting wet all over. The day was hot, and it was noon, with the sun beaming forth without a cloud; nor was there tree or shrub for shade. I sent my horse back, and undertook it. A fever came on before I had gone far, and I suffered a burning thirst. To drink the water of the swamp I was afraid; but, luckily for me, my kind friends had given me a bottle of a strong decoction of cherry bark, dogwood, and hoarhound, for me to take

by the wineglassful as a tonic; and bitter as it was I drank it up, applying the bottle to my lips, of very thirst. I got to the house of sister Howe, in Wilmington, and to bed; sweated off my fever, and had no more of it. The British never came.

Can you now have patience for another witch story? There were two old negro women belonging to the Church in Wilmington, (Clarinda and Lucy,) who had been held in high esteem from the beginning; and, indeed, except for this witchcraft affair, deserved the reputation of being as good as the best of our colored members. But Clarinda fell under a persuasion that Lucy was a witch, and had such proofs of it as poor old Lucy could not disprove. The question between them was of long standing, as to the general charge, and the specifications numerous: of which, such as had transpired more than a year before had been adjudicated by my predecessor; who gave sentence that there was no such thing as witch or witchcraft, and that Clarinda must renounce her superstition, and become reconciled to her sister, or be excluded the Church. But this summary process did not answer. The old sore remained unhealed, and soon broke out afresh; so that Lucy still lay under the imputation of being a witch. Clarinda charged against her, that on the day of trial, there in presence of the preacher, Lucy had abused her triumph by bewitching her. And the specification was, that when, doing as she had been

required to do; she (Clarinda) gave her hand to Lucy, she, (Lucy,) by the power of her art, which no Christian could exercise, caused the hand which she held in hers to itch and burn unnaturally; and caused this itching and burning to extend to all her limbs, and break out in frightful sores, the scars of which she still carried. All which, Lucy, of course, denied stoutly. And now what was the preacher to do with such a case? To reäffirm with my predecessor that the charge was absurd, could be of no avail, for Clarinda's protest of "What I feel I feel, for all my preacher say there a'n't no witch," deserved some consideration. It was conceded that if Lucy had bewitched Clarinda, she must of consequence be a witch; and that if she was a witch she could not be a Christian. All that was plain. But I instituted a new question, which was, whether if Clarinda was indeed a Christian, and no mistake, it might be possible for her to be witched by Lucy, or any one else who should attempt it? Would Clarinda consent for the Bible to answer this question? Of course she would; she might not desire any thing else. And I read from the Bible as its answer, Numbers xxxiii. 23, "Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel." This was a point in the case that altered the case, and turned the force of the protest, ("what I feel I feel,") as strongly against Clarinda as against Lucy. And now, from one and the other, I required to know particularly on what

grounds their profession of belonging to Jacob rested. Each told her experience at length, while I listened with close attention. "Can you both be deceived?" said I, "for if one is, the other may be." And turning to the complainant, I asked with emphasis, "Clarinda, are you right sure that you are a Christian?" She was deeply troubled, but answered in the affirmative. "How then," I rejoined, "was it possible for Lucy to witch you?" She seemed utterly confounded; and I relieved her by reading Job ii. 1–8, and by remarking briefly on it, to the effect, that what witches could not do, Satan might, and he might possibly have had power to afflict her as she had been afflicted; and may have done it at the very time specified, for the purpose of producing the mischief which had come of it. The spell was now broken. They embraced each other, and remained for the rest of their lives in peace together. It is better to condescend to the weakness of others, than attempt their correction by main strength. Nor is it an act of great condescension to suffer a weakness, where there is evident goodness in the weak brother.

I had great satisfaction in my labors among this class of my people. The Church planted among them by Mr. Meredith in troublous times had been well disciplined, and furnished our leaders and principal members at present, who exerted a salutary influence on the younger, both by their good example in all things, and their zealous exhortations. The preacher they regarded as their best

friend, whose counsel they should follow as from God. Trials were rare; and there was a constant increase of numbers. And I say in sincerity, that I believe I have never served a more Christian-hearted people, unless those were so with whom I was associated at the same time among the whites. Among these, (the whites,) I have no recollection of a single trial, nor cause for one, during the year. And whilst offences were avoided, our seasons of Christian fellowship, in the prayer-meetings, the class-meetings, the love-feast, were appreciated as they should be by the whole society, and were very refreshing. Of the people of the community I received nothing worse than marks of respect. Detraction had lost its tongue. The negro meeting-house was become the Methodist church, and the stories about what the Methodists believed, and how they managed their secret meetings, seemed to be forgotten. But what was more interesting to me, my earnest reasonings from Scripture began to be followed with fruit among the upper circle, of whom several were fully convinced of the truth, and were seeking to be justified by faith without the works of the law. The way was thus prepared for my successor, (the Rev. Samuel K. Hodges,) who reaped more than a golden harvest.

I have to conclude this Conference year (for the calendar year was out) with one of those adventures which I have never looked back upon without a shudder. I will relate it in the barest statement of the facts, and if they make me to have been a

fool or madman, very well; I can only say I was young, and none of the older persons who were cognizant of the facts said nay, at the time. Conference this year came late, being held in January instead of December, the usual Conference month. The place of its session was Fayetteville, eighty miles above Wilmington. I could not attend it, because of Mrs. Capers expecting to be confined at that very time. But the time was come; the Conference session was over; and in three days more Bishop Asbury and one or two others would be with us in that shanty parsonage, to pass several days on the Bishop's annual visitation. Besides, there would probably come with the Bishop the preacher of the opening year, whose would then be the right of occupancy. We must leave the parsonage. To add to my perplexity, all the ready money at my command had been reduced to a mere trifle, absolutely insufficient to pay board anywhere for the time before us; not to mention a particular fee of twenty dollars; and my father's estate having gone into the hands of an indifferent person for its management, nothing could be commanded from that quarter; and to cap it all, there was not one of our friends belonging to the Church in Wilmington who could bear the burden of accommodating us. In this condition of things, as we were sitting at breakfast, more gay than sad under it all, having our good friend, sister Barrett, with us, (since better known in Wilmington as both a person of great worth and usefulness,) I bantered her to carry Anna

home to her mother. "That I will," she answered, "if you will go with us." The jest was carried on between us by fixing stages on the road at convenient distances, where, at the worst, it would be as well for Mrs. Capers as at the parsonage, till we talked ourselves into a serious meaning of what we said. Arrangements were instantly made, and that night we were at the house of our friends Allston, ten miles from Wilmington. The house of our friends, Mr. and Mrs. William Gause, on Shallot, thirty miles farther on, over a smooth road, was to be the next stage, if we made another. At either of these places we should be in clover, and might be sure of a hearty welcome for any length of time. At brother Allston's, (Mrs. Capers appearing exceeding well in the morning and inclined to it,) we concluded to set out for brother Gause's; reached there about 5 o'clock; and at 10, I was a father. It was on the 18th January, 1814; and the child then born under circumstances so peculiarly trying and specially providential, has, thus far, been particularly favored through life, having enjoyed almost entire exemption from disease, and given birth to nine children, of whom eight are living at this date, (1851.) I happen to pen this in an apartment of the Wesleyan Female College, at Macon, Georgia, of which her husband has been president for the last ten years.

My appointment for 1814 was Santee Circuit; and after Mrs. Capers had perfectly recovered, and it was safe beyond doubt for her to take the road

again, we took leave of our most kind friends at Shallot, and went to her mother's; where leaving her till I should have made a round on my circuit, I went to my work. You will remember that this was the circuit in which our family lived. My honored father was no more. My brother-in-law, Maj. Legrand Guerry, and my uncle, Capt. George S. Capers, and my aunt his wife, had also passed to their heavenly rest. My uncle was the first, having died in 1809; my brother-in-law followed in 1811; my father in 1812; and my aunt in 1813. And what a vacuum was here! But meanwhile my brother Gabriel (who had married the daughter of the Rev. Thomas Humphries, my old friend of Jeffers' creek, in Darlington District) was settled at Lodebar, in the neighborhood of my sister; who had now married a second husband, the Rev. Thomas D. Glenn; and our venerable friend, the Rev. Thomas Humphries, had been induced to remove his residence into the same neighborhood also. There was, therefore, still a great interest for us in that neighborhood; and it was arranged for Mrs. Capers to divide her time with my brother and sister, during our continuance in the circuit. Circumstanced as I was, there was no other appointment in the Conference so convenient as this, and no other so desirable; but of my work I have no more to say, than that, from the time of getting to it, the appointments were regularly filled without exception through the year, the attendance on preaching and at class was good, and we had an-

other good camp-meeting at the old place, Rembert's. Good was done, perhaps much good, but every thing went on so uniformly as to furnish nothing for a recollection at the present date. Nevertheless, it was an eventful year to me—perhaps no other one more so. It was my second year of married life in the Methodist itinerancy. The experiment of such a mode of life seemed fully made, by the last year spent as a stationed preacher, occupying one of the three parsonage-houses belonging to the Conference; and now this year which I was spending on a circuit, the circuit at home, with my wife and child staying alternately with my brother and sister. At least, there was no other more favorable experiment that might have been made for these two years, and no other practicable for the future. And what was I to make of it? In Wilmington, with my wife alone, it had cost me three hundred dollars to procure subsistence of the most frugal kind; a sum of between one hundred and fifty and two hundred dollars having been all that the collections could furnish for all purposes above what was necessary for keeping the church open and in order. In the circuit, (any circuit,) I might receive eighty dollars for myself, eighty dollars for my wife, my travelling expenses, (which were then understood to take in little more than the cost of horse-shoeing and ferriage,) and no more. It had been ascertained that my father's removal, and change of his planting interest from rice to cotton, just before the embargo and war, had seriously in-

volved his estate, which might be barely sufficient for his widow and three little sons by her; and we, of the first marriage, must be content with sharing among us a legacy from our grandfather Singeltary, for our patrimony, except only, on my part, a small farm which my father had given me in anticipation of my marriage.

I was not avaricious. I hope I never have been. For myself, any thing might answer, if I was not even emulous of excelling in ascetic virtue. But there were two things which I could not brook: the exposure of my wife to hardships, was one; and to be made dependent on individuals who might regard me burdensome, was the other. And while for the present year we were not involved in either of these evils, but were as happily situated as we could desire with those who loved us as themselves, it was plain that there was no next appointment for us which might not involve us in them. The general policy of the Church, sustained by the opinion of a majority of the preachers and people, was against the preachers' marrying, and therefore against any provision for the support of preachers' families which might encourage their marrying. For a preacher to take a family about from circuit to circuit was out of the question, except he should board them at his own expense, or place them (as for the present year I had done) with particular friends living in the circuit. No circuit would make any provision for them, and the Discipline required none to be made. The few who had wives

had homes for them, and I too must have a home for my wife, of necessity. But there appeared no way for me to procure such a home without locating. My farm was unsettled, and to settle it must require my presence. And besides that, it would require money; which I had not, and which I might not obtain by the sale of property, for the reason that I had none which I might sell without diminishing a barely sufficient force for farming at all. It must be borrowed; and then it would require my personal exertions to pay it back again. With these views, I applied for a location, and was located at the Conference in Charleston, December, 1814, after having travelled but six years.

Thus I became involved in the cares of this life. My whole plan was, immediately to go to work to settle my farm in an humble but comfortable manner, and make a crop of provisions; and as soon as I should get ready, take into my family a few boys, (not more than eight or ten,) to be educated at a certain price. And as I apprehend it may be thought that I was, at least in part, influenced by my wife to this great change of employment, to whom, it may naturally be supposed, the itinerancy was not so pleasant as a settled mode of life might be, I will take occasion to say at once that it was not so. No, if I had been advised by her, I had never left the work to which we both believed I had been called. She doubted, she hesitated, she objected to it from the first moment that I introduced the subject to her. Never did she utter a

word nor make a sign in favor of it, but against it; and at last she yielded with extreme reluctance, saying, "If you are clear in your mind, you must do it, but I fear you will do it too much on my account." Angelic woman! Had she known it was the hearse to bear her to an early grave, and had I known it, the sides of the controversy had been changed. It was as she suspected. There were indeed strong reasons for my course, as we have seen, but there was a stronger one underlying them all, which I would fain have hid even from myself, and that was the pain of being absent from her. What a deception was this! And yet what honesty might be so severe as to be proof against it? Had the temptation been presented in some other form, had it concerned somebody else, some other interest than the pulse of life, it had resulted differently, I think. Why might I not have anticipated the change which even then was ready to be begun in the economy of the Church? Why was I not wise enough to know, not only that such a change was wanted, but that, on the principles of our progress, it was indispensable, and must very soon take place? Why not have seen that I was called to sustain my part in this necessary change of policy in the Church? But there was something that kept me from seeing, and I was blind.

Having located, I applied myself most assiduously to the work before me. I had fields enclosed, but no house, except a small kitchen, a meat-house, a

barn, and a stable, which had been put up for me by my father. First to build a house of four small rooms and a piazza, and prepare the grounds for planting, was my object. Oats came first for the field-work, (four or five acres,) then corn, (some twenty-five or thirty acres,) then potatoes, (an acre or two,) and last, a patch of rice. Two good horses were sufficient. I bought a cow, and when the grass sprang, another; at first two sows, and afterwards others. The house ready for occupancy, I became too much interested in the field to be only a manager, and betook myself to the plough; which having done, I must prosecute it diligently for example's sake. The manner of the farm was, to take the horses to the plough before sunrise, and work till the cook's horn called us to breakfast; then prayers and breakfast, having the horses meanwhile in the stable, where there was always food for them; then to the plough again till the same horn called us to dinner; then, after the hour at dinner for man and horse, to the plough till after sunset. I had never done an hour's work in a field in my life when I began to do this; and was there ever a severer exercise for one who never held a plough before? At first, I ploughed all day, and at night had fever; then I ploughed all day, and had no fever; and after some few weeks, I had rather plough than not; so that I have never been able to pity a ploughman since. Every thing kept in good condition about me, and in the fall of the year there were provisions

enough made for the year ensuing, and pigs and poultry a plenty, in view of the expected large family I was to have.

I preached every Sabbath, and heard of no fault-finding, though I was conscious in myself that there may have been cause for it. On the principle of the adage, that where you lend your ear you give your mind, I had become too much engrossed with secular things through the week to be very spiritual on Sunday. And I was conscious, too, that whereas I had located to meet a necessity, only till that necessity should have been met, feeling that spiritual and not temporal things constituted my vocation, and that the latter should be subordinate to the former, I was losing by imperceptible degrees my former clearness of perception of the paramount obligation of a minister to his ministry, and the quickness of feeling proper to it, just in proportion as I felt the cares of husbandry and had my thoughts taken up with temporal concerns. Temporal things were stealthily gaining in importance, if things spiritual were not declining; and the duties of husband and father for this life were getting to be considered too much apart from their indispensable connection with the life to come, and God's blessing for both worlds. Thus it was with me when, on the 30th of December, 1815, at 6 o'clock P M., my first son was born, and at 10 o'clock the idol of my heart expired! That morning I had seen her the perfection of beauty, the loveliest of her sex; and contemplated her as

the first of women, the pride and joy of my life. And now, at night, something had gone wrong, I knew not what, and before there might have been time for alarm, she was no more. I cannot dwell upon it, but I owe her something who was my wife, whose surpassing beauty stood not in her husband's eye, but was acknowledged by all her acquaintances; whose whole life had been passed without a reproof from father, mother, or friend; whose nature was gentleness and love to a degree not to be exceeded; whose modesty was so perfect as never to bear, even from myself in private, a word expressing admiration of her personal beauty, without a blush to crimson her cheek; whose faith in Christ was simple, sincere, and consistent; whose piety kept her in the love of God continually, so as always to enjoy the hope of the gospel and the reason of it; and who, with all her loveliness, was mine, as completely as the purest and strongest affection could make her so. Nor was she only to be admired and loved for her beauty and her sweetness: gentle as she was, she had a noble courage, which I several times saw proved: as when we were at Smithville, and the British were expected, at Wilmington, with those desperate chances of the road before us; and even here in our out-of-the-way retirement. Nor was she one of those charming ones who seem to think themselves too charming to be useful. No one required less on her own account than my sainted Anna, while few might boast of a readier mind or more efficient will for the service of

her friends. And whatever she did she did well: her spirit was active, taking hold on every thing about her to purpose, and managing well all her household affairs.

Bishop Asbury and Bishop McKendree had both been expected to attend the Conference at Charleston in December, 1815; but the latter only was enabled to attend it; Bishop Asbury, sinking under his infirmities, and almost at his end, having been obliged to lie by on the road. He was now (January, 1816) aiming for Baltimore, with but little hope of eking out life till the session of the General Conference in that city; and as he passed through Rembert's neighborhood I saw him, and, with a bleeding heart, asked him for a circuit. A circuit, any circuit, would now have been a boon. "I am a dying man," replied the Bishop, "or I would give you one. I shall never see another Conference in Carolina. You had better wait for your Quarterly Conference to recommend you to a Presiding Elder." It was a sore disappointment, but there was no alternative.

During the year 1814, my brother John had purchased the place of my father's last residence, (adjoining which was the farm I have been speaking of,) and was living at it. This circumstance had contributed no little to our satisfaction during the year which had now closed with death and darkness; and, in view of my instantly returning to the itinerancy, it offered a relief for some perplexity I felt as to the best and kindest disposition in my

power to make of the few negroes I had been farming with. And it was concluded between us that, as the whole concern put under the management of a hired overseer was not sufficient to insure any considerable income, and might be abused, I would leave the negroes to themselves, with stock and provisions sufficient for their use, and that he would visit them often enough to give advice on any matter of interest to them. This arrangement was made in the month of January. They had corn enough for all purposes, and more than I had consumed the year before, two good milch cows, my best farm-horse and all utensils for the field, as much bacon as weighed two hundred and fifty pounds to each of the adults and half as much to each child, and several sows with young pigs, beside a number of shoats. I was sure that with the same provisions, properly husbanded, twice the number of persons might be fully fed. They planted twenty acres of corn and ten or eleven of cotton. Of the cotton, never a pod was picked, for the reason that none was produced. Of the corn, they gathered in October about half as much as I had left them in January. The cows and calves were dead, so were the sows and shoats and pigs, except some seven or eight left from the spring litters, which were barely living. So that I estimated my loss by the experiment of the year, at about as much as it had cost me the year before to get the place settled. I never saw them till in October I went to see what they had produced.

But before this result was known, or had been anticipated, I found myself embarrassed from another quarter. The surplus produce sold in January, including some stock, left me still owing several hundred dollars. This my brother John proffered kindly to assume the payment of; but for some cause, I know not what, my creditors declined it, and insisted on retaining my notes. It seemed a little curious, that the same principle of abiding contracts, which had kept me to my circuit rounds under the temptations of 1809, should now forbid my going to a circuit in 1816. But so it was. I had to be just in the first place, and pay my debts, lest my good should be evil spoken of, and my zeal for religion be made an occasion, by any one, of reproaching it. During some six weeks that I was in Georgetown as a supply for the stationed preacher, who had gone to the General Conference at Baltimore, I received dun upon dun; evidently from an apprehension that I had gone to a business in which nothing could be made for the payment of debts.

I might have mentioned in my notices of the last year, (1815,) that although my plans were laid with a view only to the year ensuing as regarded teaching, I was induced to take charge of the two eldest sons of my friend, William Johnson, Esq., of Santee, who continued with us from early in July till the Christmas holidays. The sad cause which prevented others from coming at the present date, (January, 1816,) had also prevented the re-

turn of these, as it was understood that the death of my wife had broken up my plans. But while I was in Georgetown this spring, as above stated, I was solicited by a brother-in-law of Mr. Johnson, Robert F Withers, Esq., (who then passed his summers in the neighborhood of Statesburg,) to pass the summer with him and teach his children, for which I should receive a liberal salary; for so I considered a hundred dollars a month to be, with board and keeping my horse, and liberty to visit my children at will.

But before I go to Mr. Withers, let me return to Mr. Johnson. As soon as he had heard that I was in Georgetown, he sent a letter of condolence with a request for me to visit him, and let him know when it might be convenient for me to come, that he might send for me. I was received with tears by all the family, and my dear boys Andrew and Pinckney wept as if they had lost a mother. In the morning Mr. Johnson proposed a walk, and opened in the most delicate manner possible the object of it as soon as we were alone together. He thought I must have incurred expenses in the last year looking to the income of the present, which might be inconvenient to me. He had a considerable sum of money in the hands of his factor which he did not need for any present use; and he would be the obliged person if I would allow him to advance me any sum. He spoke of Mrs. Capers, her affectionate kindness to his sons, their love for her, the mournful interest which the family felt for me,

and mentioned a thousand dollars as the least he thought I might require on account of the last year, and which he was to be the obliged person by advancing. I consented to three hundred. And I will only add that when, a year or more afterwards, I was ready to repay it, he begged to be excused, assuring me that he had accepted a note only to relieve my feelings at the time, but had torn the name off before putting it in his desk, and was still very sorry that I had not consented to accept a thousand dollars instead of three hundred. Not a dollar would he have; and it was plain that I had not thought well enough of mankind to suppose there might be a William Johnson among my acquaintances.

In June I entered on the duties of my engagement with Mr. Withers, on the Hills, near Statesburg. His seat was about ten miles from my sister's, where were my two infant children, Anna and Theodotus. My most kind and faithful sister had been with us several days at the time of the death of my beloved wife, and had taken the children home with her as their foster-mother; and well did she fulfil a mother's part by them. Here with my sister and children I usually passed two days in seven; the rest of my time being devoted to the instruction of the Misses Withers, Sarah, Anslie, and Charlotte, fourteen, twelve, and ten years old; and lovely pupils were they.

If I had been as considerate of public prejudice (or, perhaps, opinion) as I might have been at the

age of twenty-six, I should not have to state that at the expiration of the term of my engagement with Mr. Withers, I was married to Miss Susan McGill, my present wife. This was on the 31st of October. I believe, indeed, that I have always had a right appreciation of the duty one owes to public sentiment; and if the early date of my second marriage be not an exception, I have been scrupulously observant of it all through life. What is called popularity is another thing. Since I was converted, I have classed that with its fellows of "the abominations of the Egyptians;" and my observations on men, both of the Church and the State, have gone strongly to the conclusion that it is an "abomination of desolation," and that whether it may be called Roman or Egyptian, it cannot consist with Christian principle. The man who would make himself popular, stoops and crouches to just that degree. He puts himself in a posture for any thing, and to go in any direction; a chameleon of any color, a fawning spaniel or a barking cur, just as may suit the time. He may be a feather in the wind, or a tennis-ball tossed by a child's hand; but he has lost the form of a man when he has made popularity his principle. Not so as to the respect of the individual for public sentiment; that is, the common judgment of society as to the proprieties of life and conduct Popularity works against society; this feeling of respect for public sentiment works for it. This proceeds from a feeling of the responsibility pro

per for the individual towards the community: that affects to honor the community for individual advantage, and exalts self-interest above the general good. The one is a generous virtue, and the other just the opposite. If the opinion were true which I have heard expressed, that a second wife is a supplanter, and in contracting a second marriage one forgets the former wife, or loses his affection for her, transferring it to the supplanter; or if only that to marry a second wife implies such an interference with the affections as is inconsistent with the most tenderly cherished love and affection for the dead, I could never have been married a second time, nor could ten years have prepared me for the unnatural revulsion. I did not believe so, nor did I feel so. It was alike natural and sincere for me to weep for the dead or solicit a living wife; and the woman should have had not my affection but abhorrence who should have come to my arms as a supplanter. Anna was enshrined in my heart never to be dispossessed; and the wife I solicited was not to dispute her title to her burying-place. And yet, I repeat, I solicited the hand of Miss McGill as sincerely as I had done that of Miss White; and I loved to talk of my dear Anna to her. I loved to tell her how she must have loved to know her, as her own soul's sister; as I have since told her how I shall love to introduce them when we meet together in heaven. Nature's secrets are not to be disclosed in words; but so simple was my heart, so sincere my con-

duct, that one of my first cares after my second marriage was to introduce Mrs. Capers to my mother, (Anna's mother,) as her daughter. I knew she could never doubt my love for the deceased, and she herself had been married a second time.

I could not yet be ready for the itinerancy, but must be occupied for another year at least with temporal things, if only to fetch up the losses of the blind experiment I had made of having my negroes to provide for themselves by farming. My location was Georgetown, with a rented house at North Island for the summer; my employment, teaching a school. And thus commenced the year 1817

Susan McGill (my present wife) was the daughter of William and Ann McGill, of Kershaw District, South Carolina. Her father was from Ireland, and when she was about eight years old, he was induced to remove to Georgia. The place they lighted on was exceedingly sickly, and the family suffered much by sickness, Mr. McGill not less than the others, and perhaps more. By this means, and the unfaithfulness of one of those double-eyed friends, who are never to be trusted, after a few years he lost pretty much what property he had had, and returned to Carolina, where, at least, he had some friends left. His near neighbor, a Mr. Turley, left him, in his will, a small farm in a healthy portion of Kershaw District. Leaving his family for a time in charge of his eldest son, at a farm near Columbia, belonging to

General Horry, he visited the farm in Kershaw District, and prepared to move his family thither. During his absence his eldest son, Samuel, obtained a situation in the upper part of Columbia, called Cotton Town. His kind and obliging manners made him many friends: among the ladies was Mrs. Horry. After the death of her husband, (General Horry,) her attachment to Samuel induced a request from her to his parents to spend the winter with her in Georgetown. The friendship of this excellent lady grew into attachment, and resulted in his eldest sister, Susan, becoming a member of her family. Samuel died early after his sister's marriage, and was a spirited, promising young man. William, after receiving a thorough training for business, (at the house of Messrs. McDowell and Black, in Charleston,) and making something clever on his own account, removed at a later period to Alabama, with his mother, (his father being dead,) several sisters, and a younger brother named James. I saw him some seven years ago at Tuskaloosa, where he was at that time a member of the Legislature, and still had the care of his sisters, his mother being dead. It was at Mrs. Horry's that I became acquainted with Miss McGill, and at her house we were married; for she had become as a daughter to her benefactress, who had never had a child of her own; and had been so regarded for several years.

Our friend resided in Columbia for the summer and fall, and in Georgetown for the winter and

spring, having her estate on Winyaw Bay. And in anticipation of our going to Georgetown, she had arranged that we should occupy her house, and be furnished with provisions from her plantation, at will. But, except for a few weeks, I availed myself of neither. The house was too remote for a school, and it was not to my taste to order any thing in her absence from her plantation. She chided me kindly for this, and said she ascribed it to my not understanding her intentions towards my wife. It was the only time we had any conversation about property. She had several times hinted at it before, and I had as often evaded her; but now she told me plainly, that the instrument which she had had drawn up after the death of her husband, and when Susan had but just come into her family, was not to be her will. She had a prejudice against making wills, or she would have made another long before then. The plantation which I was too delicate to order a bushel of rice from, was to be mine, and a number of the negroes mine, except a token of affection for one who had been long in her family as a daughter, but for whom ample provision had already been made by General Horry; and a hundred dollars a year to an orphan girl till she should be married. There, however, still lay the repudiated will in the drawer, which had been so long made, and now so decidedly renounced, and which, as little as she may have thought of it, was to be her will at last. She had been not many weeks in Georgetown, when she was

taken sick. Her physician called it rheumatism, and told her friends that little was the matter, more than rheumatism in connection with a cold. Mrs. Capers visited her every day, and every day heard the story about rheumatism. I grew uneasy, and went to see her—doubted her physician's judgment, and proposed that she should be removed to my house; as if barely for a pleasant change, but meaning to employ another physician. She was removed. Another physician was called immediately, for she was extremely ill. He pronounced the case hopeless, and she died in a few days. The second physician was Dr. John Wragg, a nephew of my second mother; and suspecting something, probably, he asked me at the first moment we were alone after seeing her, if she had a will, or wished to alter one; and on being told how the matter was, urged me instantly to send for a lawyer. But it could not be. She had been trifled with to within two hours of her consciousness in life, and I owed her too much to take up those two hours at the threshold of eternity with a lawyer; and I owed myself too much to allow a suspicion to attach to me that I had brought her to my house in a dying condition to filch her property. When her situation was made known to her, the will came first to her mind. But I was at her bedside for another purpose, and claimed her thoughts for Christ and his salvation; and several times afterwards, when scarcely able to

articulate, she tried to say something about that will.

My school was well attended—quite as much so as I desired it to be. We had the satisfaction of being in one of the best of communities—Georgetown at its best estate, I should think—and of having the ministry and intimate friendship of that excellent man, the Rev. Samuel K. Hodges. But there was nothing that contributed more to my enjoyment than the affectionate attachment which subsisted between my wife and the family of my deceased wife, which was so simple, and pure-hearted, and entire, that a stranger might have thought she was the very daughter and sister of them all. In June we repaired to our rented summer-house on Du Bordieu's Island, which is separated by an inlet from North Island, and together with that island served the planters and principal inhabitants of Georgetown as a healthy retreat in summer. My school was continued here for the benefit of my neighbors, and such others as would board their children, till late in October, when I returned to Georgetown, and resumed it there; and during this period I preached every Sabbath day "in my own hired house."

And now what was wanting? Whether at the island or in town, my school was amply sufficient for my wants; my health was good; I was in a community of friends, with not a few of those I most loved about me; I enjoyed public respect and

confidence; and yet I was unhappy. During the time at the island, when surrounded by men of the world only, and in such near neighborhood with them as to hear and see continually what the world afforded for the happiness of its people, it was as if the mysterious words, "MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN," had been written on the wall of every parlor. I loathed it all, though I loved its victims. I loathed it, and yet I was haunted with spectres of apostates who for the world had abjured religion. Shall ever I be one? And I was afraid, though I felt that neither of its divinities, "the lust of the flesh," nor "the lust of the eye," nor "the pride of life," was any god with me. I heard the voice of preaching, but it was my own voice that I heard; of prayer, but it was I who prayed. I heard, perchance, the notes of some song of Zion, but the singers were my wife and myself alone. I would contrast my loneliness with the times gone by, when in the woods which had never known an axe I felt not to be alone, because I had left a Christian brother's house and was going to meet a company at the house of God. The prayer-meeting, the class-meeting, the love-feast, I had none; but the world, the world was ever about me, and turn which way I might it still pursued me. I thought, nay, I felt, that if I had never been conversant with it before, having less knowledge I might feel less aversion. But it was the same world which I had been bred in; and which I had renounced, because it knew not, and could not

know, the cross of Christ. My return to Georgetown was a great, a very great relief. How sweet was communion with brother Hodges; how pleasant the society of brethren; how grateful the fellowship of the class-meeting; how delightful the gospel from the lips of another; how precious the table of the Lord! Could I doubt? Surely I could not. I had been out of my place, and therefore could not be at ease. God had not meant for me to serve tables, but to preach; nor to keep a school for so much a quarter, but to feed his flock, his sheep and his lambs. What would I pass another summer for, excluded the privileges of the Church of Christ? What might recompense me for another summer like the past at Du Bordieu's Island? But there was only one way of escape for me, and come what might I must take that way. I must reënter the itinerancy, and I must do so at once. There, I should not bear my burdens unsustained; and heavy if they should be, I should have the consolation, best above all, of knowing that they were the Lord's, and borne for His sake, and not of my producing.

Our fourth Quarterly Meeting came on in a few weeks after my return to Georgetown, and I surprised brother Kennedy, the Presiding Elder, by applying for a recommendation to be reädmitted into the itinerancy. This done, I went actively to work to arrange every thing for it. My school was closed with the Christmas holidays, and I was ready to go to my appointment. No time was lost,

and in January, 1818, I was again at work as a travelling preacher. My appointment was Columbia; where another had been added to the list of parsonages belonging to the South Carolina Conference, and which was now at my service. It was a small concern, and poor; but there was no reprobating "TEKEL" to be seen written on its walls, and I could sing,

> "My soul mounted higher
> In a chariot of fire,
> And the world, it was under my feet."

Poverty itself had a charm when it stood in an open renunciation of the world for the Master's sake. As to the parsonage-house, or its furniture, or provisions, I was not responsible for them, good or bad.

My friends in Columbia will excuse the liberty I take in what I here say of the accommodations furnished the preacher in 1818, and may even take a pleasure in contrasting the present with the past in that respect. They will hardly dream of any reflection on them by a statement of facts, any more than that pattern society of Methodists in Wilmington might at the present time by the facts of the time of my service in that place. The cases were different, to be sure, for in 1818, in Columbia, we had some five or six brethren, any one of whom was worth more than an equivalent of all the property of all the Methodists of Wilmington in 1813 put together. And it is also true that these richer

brethren were the stewards. I mention it to show what was the general state of things among us at that time as regarded the support of the preachers; and shall be faithful, without the slightest feeling of any possible unkindness.

The parsonage-house was of one story, about forty feet long, eighteen or twenty wide, and consisted of three rooms, of which one, at the west end of the house, had the breadth of the house for its length, by some seventeen feet for its breadth. It had a fire-place, and a first coat of rough plastering to make it comfortable in winter. Across the middle of the house was a passage, communicating with this principal room on one side, and two small rooms which took up the remainder of the house on the other side of it. These two small rooms also were made comfortable, as the principal one was, by a first coat of rough plastering, but without any fire-place. There was no shed nor piazza to the house, and the story was low, so that in summer it was very hot. There was in one of the small rooms a bed, a comfortable one, but I think there was neither bureau nor table, and I have forgotten whether there was a chair appropriated to it, besides the four belonging to the parlor, or not. Perhaps, as four chairs were enough for our use at any one time, it was thought as well to have them taken from parlor to chamber and back again. The parlor (as I call the room which was appropriated to all purposes except sleeping) was furnished with a table, of pine wood, which, for having been

some time in a school-house, was variously hacked and marked with deep and broad notches, heads of men, and the like, which, however, could not be seen after we got a cloth to cover them; a slab, of a broad piece of pine plank, painted Spanish-brown, on which were a pitcher, five cups and saucers, and three tumblers; a well-made bench, for sitting, nine feet long, of pine also, and three Windsor chairs. I am not sure whether we found a pair of andirons in the parlor or not, so that I cannot add such a convenience to the list with certainty. With this doubtful addition, the above furnishes an entire list of the furniture. In the yard was a small shanty of one room for a kitchen, and another still smaller for a store-room, or meat-house, or I know not what. We used it, small as it was, for an *omnium gatherum*. And I repeat, so far was I from complaining, that I even exulted in this poverty. For a man to be inferior to his circumstances, I thought, might be a humiliation indeed, but I could see no reason to be mortified at what others had imposed on a pure conscience. And I have a vivid recollection of receiving company and seating them on that long bench with as perfect ease of manner as I might have done if they had called on me at a tent at a camp-meeting, where nothing better was to be expected. In particular, I remember to have felt something more than bare self-possession, when, being waited on by a joint committee of the two houses of the Legislature, with a request to preach to that honorable body,

and perceiving that my bench might hold their honors, I invited them to be seated on it, while I took a chair before that presence, feeling to look as if I did not lack good-breeding. And I had a feeling, too, as if not a man of them need be mortified by a seat so humble as was that pine bench. What was the bench to them? and what was the bench to me? They could occupy it with dignity, and so might I, either that or my half-backed chair.

The general position of the Methodists as a denomination was exceedingly humble. They were the poorer of the people. The preachers had been raised up from among that people, and, in worldly respects, were still as they were. Every thing about the denomination partook somewhat, perhaps much, of the cast of poverty. The preachers generally wore very common clothing, mostly of homespun, cut in the style of a clown of a century past. The meeting-houses, even in the towns, were inferior wooden buildings. The aspects of poverty, if not poverty itself, seemed to be Methodistic, if not saintly; and Methodism in rags might be none the worse, since its homespun was esteemed better than the broadcloth of other sects. And there had been an everlasting preaching, too, against preaching for money: that is, against the preachers being supported by the people. It had been reiterated from the beginning that we were eighty-dollar men, (not money-lovers, as some others were suspected of being,) till it got to be considered that for Methodist preachers to be made comfortable,

would deprive them of their glorying, and tarnish the lustre of their Methodistic reputation. It was all nonsense, perfect nonsense, but it was not then so considered. A strong case it was of the force of association, appropriating to immaterial and indifferent circumstances a value wholly independent of them, and belonging to a very different thing, which, by chance, had been found in connection with such circumstances. But who did not know that it was not the preacher's coat that made him preach with power, and that furnished him with strength for the battles of the Lord? But *that* power, in *that* preacher, reflected honor on his homespun coat, and caused the coat itself to be admired. Could broadcloth do more? It had never done as much for the persons concerned, and they were hearty for the homespun, homespun for ever. And then, who would experiment a change when things were well enough? "Let well enough alone." The preacher was just as he ought to be, and the preaching just as it ought to be, and why interfere? "The best of men were but men at the best," and who could vouch that to change his circumstances might not change the man, so as that the same man in a better coat should not preach a worse sermon? And then when such points were not presented as for an equal discussion of both sides of the question, but with the full tide and current of opinion setting one way, what might it avail for this or that individual, or even this or that society, to oppose it? Might they not expose

themselves to the imputation of being unmethodistical and worldly-minded, lowering the standard of Methodism to suit their own carnal tastes?

I remember that not long ago, when the present Trinity church in Charleston had just been completed, happening to step into it with two or three gentlemen of friendly feelings, who were not Methodists, one of them said, as in tones of regret, shaking his head as he spoke: "Ah, this does not look like Methodism. Too fine, too fine! Give me the old Cumberland street blue meeting." And this was a gentleman of the Protestant Episcopal Church, and a pretty decided Churchman besides. He seemed to think that even a High-Churchman coming to a Methodist meeting might hardly get the good of it unless he found there low, dusky walls and seats with open backs, and such like assistances of a godly worship.

But to return to my brethren of the Board of Stewards. It could not have been without a struggle that such men as they were, as to worldly position and circumstances, had identified themselves with the Methodists in that community at the time when they had done so. In doing this, they must have felt strongly the poverty of the world without the riches of grace, and the riches of poverty ennobled by this heavenly bestowment. They had come into the Church, therefore, to take it as it was, and not to reform it; the rich thus consenting, perhaps rejoicing, to be made low, as the most desirable form of exaltation. And they, finding

the Church to be pleased with its poverty, as if that poverty might be indispensable to its spirituality, adopted the prevailing sentiment, and were content with the poverty for the sake of the spirituality. They had not turned Methodists to spoil Methodism, but only for a share of its spiritual power. They were probably in fault, and as far as they may have been so, I too was to blame, for why did I not complain? Or if not, why did I not, of myself, put away that table and that bench, and those ungainly chairs? But the whole economy of 1818 was of a piece with this, so that the entire cost to the Church of keeping the parsonage that year was but a fraction over two hundred dollars. I might explain how it was so, if it were worth the trouble, but it is not. Of this, however, I am satisfied, that I have since occupied a parsonage in Columbia, when the table was mahogany, and the bench belonged to the piazza, and the parlor, and the dining-room, and two bedrooms were suitably furnished for decency and comfort; and neither was I more useful, nor did I love the people, nor did they love me more, than in that year of 1818. Changes of this sort require time; and woe to the man who should be so inconsiderate of the force of prejudice and the weaknesses of men, as to attempt them by main strength. He shall find his end accomplished, if at all, at a fearful cost.

Methodism was never poverty and rags, nor a clown's coat and blundering speech, nor an unfur-

nished, half-provisioned house, nor no house at all, for the preacher; but it was the gospel simply believed, and faithfully followed, and earnestly (even vehemently) insisted on. It was powerful, not because it was poor, but because it was the living, breathing, active, urgent testimony of the gospel of the Son of God. It apprehended Christ's presence, and took hold on his authority to perform its work. Its every utterance was a "*Thus saith the Lord.*" The Bible, the Bible was ever on its lips. Nothing but the Bible, and just as the Bible holds it, was its testimony of truth. It was all spiritual, experimental, practical, not speculative, abstracted, or metaphysical. When it preached, it was to testify of "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ;" and to both, and to every degree of both, for the time then present. When it exhorted, it was to enforce its preaching, as it ever saw sinners sporting on the brink of a precipice, and believers in danger of being seduced from their safety. And preaching or exhorting, its inexhaustible argument was, eternity—eternity at hand—an eternity of heaven or hell for every soul of man. Its great element was spirituality—a spirituality not to be reached by a sublimating mental process, but by a hearty entertaining of the truths of the gospel as they challenged the conscience and appealed to the heart for credence in the name of Christ crucified, whenever and wherever the gospel was preached. And this, together

with a moral discipline answering to it, I understand to be Methodism still, and God forbid there should come any other in its name.

We had a prosperous year, on the whole, with crowded congregations; and meetings for "the fellowship of saints," whether in class or the love-feast, were well attended. In the latter part of the year, to relieve myself of the urgency of my brother Gabriel, I addressed a note to Dr. Maxcy, of the college, as if to inquire whether any examination might be requisite in order to my obtaining a diploma; which he replied to kindly, and at the Commencement, without any thing further on the subject, I was made—alias, dubbed—A. M.

The Conference at the close of this year was in Camden, good old Camden, with its Isaac Smith, and Mathis, and Brown, and Reynolds, and Thornton, and the rest. Bishop Roberts attended it alone. The Conference was full, and whether in its business sessions, or its public ministrations, was an excellent one. Brother Hodges was then Presiding Elder of the Ogeechee District, and called for me to be appointed to Savannah. This place (now and for years past so favorably known as one of the most desirable of our stations) was then regarded the forlorn hope. There was no appointment in the Conference half so unwelcome to a Methodist preacher. After several years of ineffectual effort to plant a Methodist Church on the soil which had been trod by the feet of the Wesleys, Bishop Asbury had determined on a great sacrifice

for it, and sent the lion of his day, James Russell, who had passed as a blazing torchlight through the woodland circuits, and was thought to be the man for Savannah also. But he failed, and Savannah proved the grave of his power and success. It was not a citadel to be taken by storm, and he could not get a hearing of those who might have estimated his talents, but who were content with hearing of him that he was a wonderful ranter. Russell, however, got a church built by this sacrifice of himself, partly by his influence in the country, and perhaps more by the aid of his Presiding Elder, the Rev. Lewis Myers. But it got him in debt, and he engaged himself to assist the United States Quartermaster by foraging for the troops; (for it was during the war with Great Britain.) And thus he lost all pretension to ministerial influence or usefulness in Savannah, became discouraged, engaged in money speculations, and located. We had, then, procured a meeting-house, but not a congregation. Nor had we gained in public respect or confidence. My good brother, the Rev. Henry Bass, afterwards labored with his usual faithfulness, and purged the puny vine of some of its rotten branches, and grafted others of a better sort into it. And my impression is that the first hope of success for the Methodists in Savannah began to dawn in his labors there. But after him, and for the year (1818) just closed, we were again unfortunate. The Rev. Urban Cooper had been sent. He was a young man of uncommon talents and engaging manners,

and who might have proved eminently useful; but he found no accommodations for his family, or means for their support, and declined filling the appointment. And yet, under all these adverse circumstances, by the indomitable perseverance of brother Myers, the former Presiding Elder, we had procured a parsonage-house of respectable dimensions, which, if the Bishop would send me, I should have the use of for the year 1819. But it was strongly objected to by the Presiding Elder of the Charleston District, who wished me appointed to the city, and who was seconded by my friend Kennedy, who thought the appointment to Savannah might prove an oppressive one. In this state of the case, the Bishop decided that if I was free to go, he would send me to Savannah, but not without my consent. Brother Hodges accordingly broke the subject to me, but I declined giving an answer, further than to say, that I was more free to go anywhere than to interfere in the least degree with my appointment.

We were appointed to Savannah, and to Savannah we went. No other appointment might have been more suitable, nor afforded a finer field of usefulness, than this. And yet the announcement of it to me excited feelings of exceeding weakness. I did not doubt its being providential. I never found it difficult to believe this of any appointment at any time. Indeed, it always appeared to me that if there was any thing in the affairs of men which Providence might be believed to be concerned in,

it was the appointment of a preacher to his field of labor; involving, as it must, not only his individual interest, but that of so many others; and, whether for himself or the people, interests of the highest moment. I supposed my appointment to be of God, and did not doubt it; nor did I cherish for a moment any feeling contrary to submission, and an instant steady purpose to obey. But there was with the persuasion of its being providential, an apprehension as if the Lord's controversy with me for having left the work by locating might not have been ended; and the appointment to so sickly a place as Savannah was reported to be, (and as probably it was before the introduction of their dry culture system,) seemed to announce that some calamity was overhanging me. Was I to be deprived of another wife? or was it my only child, the first-born, and now sole representative of my deceased Anna? Or was I to be called to the trial of losing them both? If there be any one who can reason off the force of such temptations, I have never been that person. I have found how I could be sustained against them, or supported under them, so as that till they should be removed I might neither flinch nor fly, but I have found nothing more than this. I went to Savannah, and entered on my duties there, and prosecuted my labors for many months with this apprehension still painfully present. But it did me no harm, if it did not rather serve as a buckle to the bond which held me to my work, adding the inscrip-

tion of "*I am debtor,*" to that of "*As much as in me is.*"

I found things in a much better condition than I had expected. Of the Savannah or Georgia people, as distinguished from those who were there on some business account, we had but few; and of these, the city marshal, then a young man and a young Methodist, was the only individual of any influence in society. But there were several very worthy men and well-established Methodists from New York, who were invaluable to us as official members. Indeed, I found myself by no means on a "forlorn hope" appointment, but, on the contrary, with a pretty well organized little church about me. That most excellent man, Rev. Charles W Carpenter, was then there as a local preacher, and relieved me of any pecuniary responsibility, by keeping the parsonage-house for us; we having ample accommodations in it, excellent fare, and finding in him and his wife a brother and sister whom we loved as if they had both been born ours. He, too, had located in the New York Conference on a temporal account, and went into business with his father, (who had been a large merchant in that city,) and established a branch of the concern in Savannah. But Charles's ministry and merchandise proved as incompatible as mine and my farming had done, and the house failed. The failure was one of sheer misfortune, and neither father nor son was ever suspected of the slightest wrong-doing. But it broke up their business, and Charles taught school for a few years, and returning to New York,

reëntered the itinerancy in that Conference, where he has ever since been known as one of the purest of men and best of ministers. The Church in Savannah owes him high respect. And there is another name which deserves its honor and its gratitude, though not of our denomination; as indeed it deserves of others also who are not of his denomination: I mean the Rev. Dr. Henry Kollock, a name which I have ever loved to honor. Something had transpired with this great man, some years before, which had involved him with his presbytery. His congregation grew indignant at it, and required him to withdraw from the presbytery and identify himself with the Congregationalists, which was their denomination. Great excitement followed, and the Presbyterians were exceedingly offended. Not the Presbyterians of Savannah, for I believe there were none there, or if any, they were with Dr. Kollock, but the denomination, at least as far as Charleston. The Doctor was alone silent for the vindication of himself, while all Savannah was in a hubbub. It must have been ill-managed, though *I judge not of it.* There was offence; and that is always a noun of multitude, with at least one active verb for every nominative understood. I cannot pretend to parse it, but there was trouble in the Presbyterian camp, and trouble in Savannah; for Savannah seemed to belong to Dr. Kollock, as fully as he belonged to it. The people of Savannah knew him and loved him and honored him as they never did any other man.

And no wonder, for he was a man for any people to be proud of in the first degree. There was one characteristic of Dr. Kollock, however, both indispensable and inalienable to the man, which I have thought might have been chargeable with much of this trouble. Of all men he seemed the last to know the power of his influence over his people. He seemed incapable of a thought of it, much less of such an exertion of it as might have controlled them. Could he have known and felt his power, he had not been Dr. Kollock; and while he was to be seen only in the light of his own surpassing gracefulness pleading for the presbytery against himself, it was a pouring of oil not on troubled waters which might be made smooth, but on a raging fire which should only be made more fierce for the endeavor to allay it. He might have prevailed for the presbytery, but it was impossible for him to prevail against himself; and he found himself, as he thought, reduced to the alternative of choosing between presbytery and his people.

I had come to Savannah, having heard but one side of the question; but I had heard it so fully, and from persons so reliable, that my mind was prejudiced against the Doctor as one who had evaded discipline and kicked against the Church. A great man I supposed him to be, who had not proved good enough to bear to be corrected for a fault, but by force of his greatness had unworthily maintained himself in the ministry. I presently heard of him as a friend, and was silent; as a good

man, and answered nothing. I thought that as for me, I was called to the poor, and so great a man would hardly be found standing in my way. He called to see me; and I saw, I thought, in his speaking countenance, the grace of his blended dignity and meekness, and his eloquent conversation, how the people had been taken by the man. He attended my ministry; and that I could not so readily account for. But he had been there before; had frequently been at the Methodist church, and several times had preached there; and that too I could not explain. But the greatest puzzle of all was, that the poorest of my poor knew him, and loved him as a benefactor; and go where I might among the hovels of poverty, his tracks had been there; and great as everybody knew him to be, these poor people never called him great, but good: "Dear, good Dr. Kollock" was their usual title for him. I trust I have never been so unamiable as to prefer thinking evil rather than good of any man; but I had certainly been unjust to Dr. Kollock; and it was not till after his third call that I went to see him. So cruel a thing is prejudice, and so wrong it is for one to make up his mind on any matter from a showing on one side. I say that I make mention of his name with gratitude, while I honor his memory as that of one of the greatest men of my time.*

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* I hope it will not be imputed to me, for this, that I am, or ever was, a Calvinist. Dr. Kollock never suspected any such thing of me,

I will relieve this seeming digression by an anecdote of some years previous to this. At the time of Dr. Flinn's leaving Camden for Charleston, and on that account, he incurred the displeasure of some of his own sect, among whom was a rather cynical personage by the name of Cowser. There was a synod, or some such meeting, held in Charleston, at which Dr. Kollock was present, and preached with great éclat. Cowser and Flinn were both present, and after the sermon, the former, tickled with an occasion for mortifying the latter, who also was very eloquent, went up to him and said, "Well, Dr. Flinn, how does it make you feel to hear such a man as *that?*" "Why, brother Cowser," answered the Doctor dryly, "I suppose it may make me feel pretty much as it makes you feel to hear *me* preach." Good, and the cynic felt the retort.

From the beginning, my congregations in Savannah were very large; and after a short time, the church might have been filled, had it been half again as large as it was. Strikingly in contrast with

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or of my brethren. He was too truly great and good to shut up his zeal for Christ and religion to the Calvinists only. But there is a class of men who do so; and who seem to think that any courtesy or service extended to a Methodist might be profane. Thus I had the mortification of seeing myself published as a "Calvinist Methodist minister," in certain quarters, because I had preached a funeral sermon on the occasion of Dr. Kollock's death. And I suppose it to be for some such reason that a certain reverend gentleman in Georgia is now stoutly affirming in the newspapers that my late colleague, Bishop Bascom, was a Calvinist.

the church in Wilmington in 1813, there were very few negroes who attended Methodist preaching; the policy of the place allowing them separate churches, and the economy and doctrines of the Baptist Church pleasing them better than ours. There was but one side of the gallery appropriated to their use, and it was always the most thinly seated part of the church; while there were two respectably large colored churches in the city, with their pastors, and deacons, and sacraments, and discipline, all of their own. I had therefore little access to this portion of the people, and could do but little for them. Nevertheless, our few members were zealous for their Church, and often had controversies with their Baptist brethren in the neighborhood. Fine specimens of controversy, to be sure, they must have been; and I am tempted to give a sample for the benefit of controversialists in general.

I was holding a love-feast for them, and Cæsar, an elderly African, spoke with great animation of a good meeting he had had across the river, at which somebody had agreed to join the Church, and was now present for that purpose. And when he had sat down, it being time to conclude the service, I asked him if I had understood him rightly, as saying that he had brought some one to join the Church.

"Yes, sir," answered he, briskly, "dat da him."

"But did you not say, old man, that she was a Baptist?"

"Yes, sir, e Bapty."

"But why don't she stay with her own peo ple?"

Here he arose, and putting himself in an oratorical posture, he proceeded thus:

"You see, sir, ober we side de riber, (river,) some Bapty and some Metody. An de Bapty, dem say de ting tan (stand) so, (motioning to the left,) and de Metody, we say e tan so, (motioning to the right.) An so me and bro. Tom, we bin hab meetin; and one Bapty broder bin da, and dis sister bin da. An me talk pon um, an de Bapty broder talk pon um; and him talk and me talk long time. An ater (after) dis sister set down da long time, an yeddy (hear) we good fasin, (fashion,) e tell me say, 'Bro. Cæsar, me tink you right.' Me say, Ki, sister, you say you tinke me right? Me know me right. So, sir, you see me bring um to you fuh (for) join Church. An you know, sir, de Scripter say, de strongis dog, let um hole (hold) fas."

And who might have been the weaker dog where Cæsar was the stronger one? Homely work must they have made of it, but I dare say they were honest, which is more than I would say for some better-bred controvertists, who, with a fair show of speech and becoming figures, make their controversies like a dog-fight, with a bone (or a book) for the prize, and all under warrant of Scripture, as they hold it.

We had scarcely been made comfortable in our new quarters, before I found that our infant Church

was heavily in debt. And as I thought it better to clear away the rubbish at first, I immediately undertook a journey by the way of our liberal friends on Black Swamp, in Beaufort District, to Charleston, for the purpose of removing this incubus. I was gone about three weeks, when I returned with eighteen hundred dollars, which, together with an arrangement for renting part of the parsonage-house for a few years, (which had been constructed with a view to something of the sort,) cancelled the debt, and set us at liberty. The class and public collections were ample for all our wants, and, as regarded temporal things, there was no lack. I might not say that we "fared sumptuously every day," but we had a comfortable sufficiency of all good things. And this was that "forlorn hope," which had been considered so very trying that my good Bishop would not send me to it till he had first got my consent to go.

With respect to the more important matters of ministerial success, it was manifest that in neither of the towns where I had been, was there so fair a prospect of establishing our Church as here. Dr. Kollock was right in judging that there was a large and respectable portion of the community for whom the Methodist ministry promised the most likely means of conversion. And it was this judgment of that noble-minded man which induced him to befriend us. As time passed on, it was seen that we had gained a permanent congregation, who worshipped nowhere else, but morning, afternoon,

and evening were to be found at the Methodist church. And a more decorous congregation I have never preached to.

As the sickly season came on, I found myself gradually relieved of the painful apprehension which had been so troublesome before. There was an event before us for Mrs. Capers, but it came off favorably, and the 8th of August gave us a son, Francis Withers. My first son, William Theodotus, whose birth had proved the occasion of his mother's death, had died about the time of my second marriage.

An affectionate people, a kind and respectful community, crowded congregations, and our meetings for Christian fellowship well attended and profitable, made this year one to be remembered. What was thought to be the hardest appointment I could have received, proved the best I ever had had. And a better, no one need desire, of my pretensions, and with my aims in view. Every thing went well. During the summer it became apparent that the health of our friend, and everybody's friend, Dr. Kollock, was permanently injured. His flesh shrunk, he grew pale and wan, his countenance lost its vivacity, and he was unable to fulfil the duties of the pulpit or the pastorate.

It was not for the honor, God knows, but from a grateful sense of duty, that I did what I could to supply his lack of service, and preached for him generally once on the Sabbath day. His strength declined more and more, till he was struck with para-

lysis, of which he died. It was on Sunday, just as he was entering the door of his house on his return from church, that he suffered the fatal shock which deprived him instantly of consciousness, and, after a few days, of life. And I am the more particular to mention it, that I may notice what has always appeared to me the most imposing and affecting exhibition of Christian sympathy that I have ever witnessed. Prayers were offered in all the churches for him in the after-services of that melancholy day, of course; but what I allude to was the assembling of his congregation daily, morning and afternoon, with the ministers and members of the other Churches, in his church, to offer prayers to God for him. The Episcopalian minister was not with us, only for the reason that a "higher law" than humanity or charity, public virtue or personal worth, required his absence. Nothing under heaven might induce the Jews and Samaritans to pray together, though they might pray by themselves apart; and Christians of the nineteenth century, for being under the obligations of a like "higher law," might not invalidate their exclusiveness on any possible account. But it was affecting to be there. The multitude of persons assembled, the all-pervading solemnity of the scene, the intense interest manifested in the prayers, and the tears that accompanied them, while the man of God, whom all had honored for his virtues and his talents, and whose eloquent tongue had been so often listened to in that house with rapture, lay

speechless, motionless, unconscious on the bed of death, all conspired with unexampled power to impress us deeply. The physicians (who were always with him) had told us that his death was certain, and that it was impossible for him to recover consciousness, though he might linger for some time in that unconscious state. And this was especially deprecated. Earnest, fervent prayers were offered that it might please our Heavenly Father to restore him to his senses, if but for an hour; and this boon, so earnestly entreated for, was granted while we were at prayer on the morning of the third day. I was leading the exercises, when a messenger announced that our sick friend had called for me, and, giving the book to another, I instantly obeyed the summons. He was deathly pale, and the muscles of his face looked relaxed and flabby, but his eye was that of Dr. Kollock in his best estate, except a weakness of one of his eyelids. As I took his hand, and said, "God is with you, my dear sir," he answered by repeating 2 Cor. i. 5, "For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ." He seemed to know that it would cost him an effort, and spoke very slowly but distinctly each word of the text as above. He evidently was happy, knowing himself to be on the verge of Jordan, and his Redeemer with him. Several hours were allowed him, of unspeakable interest to his family and friends, in this calm triumph over death and the grave, and he fell asleep in Jesus. (And I repeat, that I esteem him

to have been one of the noblest of men.) The death of a good man is always a loss, and more the death of a good minister; but the death of Dr. Kollock was a public calamity which every one deplored, and of which the public feeling sought to express itself in the strongest manner possible.

The Conference at the close of the year was held in Charleston, and was attended by Bishop McKendree. I was returned to Savannah for the year 1820; and this being the session for the election of delegates to the General Conference in May, 1820, I was chosen one of that number.

Returning to Savannah, I had the satisfaction of receiving a most hearty welcome from the Church and the community; and I resumed the labors of my ministry with a cheerful spirit. The time passed pleasantly on, in the usual course of preaching three times every Sabbath day, and on Wednesday evenings, holding one or two prayer-meetings, and visiting the classes weekly, and whatever else my hand found to do. I had much to encourage, and nothing worth mention to perplex or embarrass me.

The General Conference at Baltimore, May 1, required me to leave my charge early in April, that I might attend it. Our mode of travelling was overland to Petersburg, and thence (or rather from City Point) to Baltimore by steamboat.

At this General Conference, I introduced the measure instituting District Conferences for the local preachers. It was my first essay at making

rules and regulations for the Church, and was alike successful and unlucky. It was successful, inasmuch as it carried; and carried too without any serious opposition from any quarter; and, I think, with less discussion and greater unanimity than I have ever known in the adoption of any measure which proposed the introduction of a new feature into our economy, except only the Plan of Separation in 1844. But it was unlucky, and had better not have been adopted, by the fault of certain local preachers of the Baltimore Conference, and in some other parts of the Connection north of Baltimore, who perverted it to purposes of mischief. And it is probable that this was induced, in part, by the discussion of "the Presiding Elder question," which was warmly, if not angrily, urged at that General Conference, in presence of those very local preachers who were shortly to give us trouble. But I have yet to be convinced that this measure of District Conferences deserves to be considered "*a startling innovation*," as Dr. Bangs calls it in his History of the Methodist Episcopal Church, (vol. iii., page 142, edition 1841,) or that the abuses by which it was dishonored, if "*foreseen*" by any member of the General Conference, were brought to the notice of that body. There may have been those who, knowing the temper of local preachers in parts of the Connection unknown to me, foresaw or suspected what came to pass in the action of a few of the District Conferences, as above stated; but I am sure that I heard of no

such prognostications before the event, neither in the General Conference, nor out of it. I sincerely attribute the failure of the District Conferences to the agitation of "*the Presiding Elder question*," in view of the importance which was given to it, and the vehemence with which it was urged. And to the same source is traceable all the "radical" disturbances which resulted in the formation of the Protestant Methodist Church. We learn from the same author that many of the local preachers themselves were much dissatisfied with the District Conference, while "*in others, where they were most active in procuring the passage of the law creating and defining the powers of this Conference*, a spirit of insubordination incompatible with the rights and privileges of the itinerancy began to manifest itself, and there can be no doubt that this injudicious measure, which had been presented to and carried through the Conference with some precipitancy, tended to foment that spirit of radicalism which ended in the secession of the party who styled themselves reformers, and who have since organized under the name of the "Protestant Methodist Church."

It is certainly an error to ascribe to the District Conferences a tendency to foment the spirit of radicalism; for there was nothing in the nature of the institution, nor in the act of the General Conference granting it, which might have any such tendency. Its whole scope and design was to elevate and improve the local preachers, and to

bring them into closer connection with the itinerancy. But something there was which "tended to foment that spirit of radicalism," and of that something the historian was not so free to speak, for, unfortunately, he was on the wrong side, and one of the principal advocates of the measure; I mean the proposition to transfer from the Bishops to the Annual Conferences the appointment of Presiding Elders, which next to the question of slavery was the most mischievous, and was altogether the most "radical," and most vehemently insisted on, of all the questions which have distracted General Conferences in my time. The debate at this Conference I have already characterized as vehement, if not angry. The power of the Bishops was assailed as incompatible with the principles of right government, and while no instance was adduced, nor could be adduced, of an abuse of that power to the injury of any one, its curtailment was insisted on with as much earnestness as if heaven and earth had been staked on the issue. That the Bishop was elected by the eldership, and held to the strictest accountability to that eldership for every act of his administration, was not sufficient for any thing but tyranny, as the innovators held it, but required the balance of a set of men to be elected in each Annual Conference for the purpose of dictating to the Bishop the action which he alone should be answerable for. If I have known what has been meant by the word "radical," I first heard the principles of radicalism

broached and insisted on in that General Conference of 1820. There the local preachers had their radicalism instilled into them, or if not, and they were radicals before, they must have been greatly comforted and edified in their previous faith by what they heard from travelling preachers. At any rate, the same outcry against the power of the Bishops which has been the key-note of radicalism from that day to this, was raised to a high pitch by that party of travelling preachers who insisted on electing the Presiding Elders as a check on the authority of the Bishops; and it continued to be vociferated at several successive General Conferences, till its evident evil fruits in the radical secession gave it its end. It was my opinion at the time, and I have not been enabled to change it by any thing I have known since, that the object of that party in the itinerant ministry was to enfeeble the administration in the appointment of the preachers, that the itinerancy might be made more convenient to them. Their fears of the episcopal authority supplied the place of any known or alleged impropriety on the part of the Bishops in the exercise of the appointing power. They did not mean a revolution which should set aside the Episcopacy altogether, but they both meant, and plied their utmost efforts to effect, such an enfeeblement of it, as we believed would lead ultimately to that result. So also I would say of the local preachers who appeared so deeply interested for their success, and who, till the secession, were un-

derstood to be in correspondence with that kindred party of itinerants. I have no idea that, at the first, they intended either revolution or secession, but that with the measure which proposed to give leading ministers a positive influence over their appointments in the itinerancy, or shortly to follow it, there should be allowed a delegation of local preachers, under the name of a lay delegation, in the General Conference. This was hinted at by more than one speaker, and oftener than once or twice, during the discussion on "the Presiding Elder question," as a thing right and proper to be done.

But of all these things I was entirely ignorant when I drew up in Savannah, in the month of March, the plan for improving the local preachers by the institution of a District Conference. I no more dreamed of the radicalism of a lay delegation to the General Conference, for the purpose of introducing local preachers there, than of that other feature of the same thing, which I was astonished to hear so stoutly advocated by leading ministers of the itinerancy in the General Conference, respecting the power which should appoint the preachers. I have ever considered these two principles—a delegation of local preachers in the General Conference, and the travelling preachers taking a share in their own appointments—as being alike "radical" with respect to the economy of Methodism But at this General Conference of 1820, let it be remembered, the disturbing question was not that of a lay delegation, but of the election of the

Presiding Elders by the Annual Conferences as a check on the authority proper to the Bishops; and the disturbers were not local preachers, but travelling preachers, from whom and their question the transition was easy and natural to the local preachers and their question. It was most unfortunate that the District Conference should have been introduced into our economy at such a time; the most unpropitious that could have been fallen on.

The entire measure, first and last, was conceived and proposed by myself. I had neither conference, conversation, nor correspondence with any local preacher on the subject, neither before the General Conference, nor during the time of its session, prior to its final action on the subject, neither at home, at Baltimore, nor anywhere else. I have already said that I was entirely ignorant of any dissatisfaction (not to say insubordination) among the local preachers in any part of the Connection, but supposed them to be in other Conferences, as I knew them to be in the South Carolina Conference, as well satisfied with the economy of the Church as any other portion of her members were. I now believe, and have long since believed, that there were about Baltimore, and perhaps north of it, certain eminent local preachers who, at the time of the General Conference in 1820, were dissatisfied with the economy of the Church, in so far as it excluded them from a direct participation in its government; but I neither knew it nor suspected it at the time; nor did I know any thing then about the men, more than the respectability of their names.

LIFE OF WILLIAM CAPERS,

FROM

HIS THIRTY-FIRST YEAR TO HIS DEATH.

BY WILLIAM M. WIGHTMAN, D. D.

LIFE

OF

WILLIAM CAPERS.

CHAPTER I.

Value of autobiography—Mr. Capers appointed Superintendent of a Mission to the Creek Indians—Stationed at Milledgeville, Georgia.

THE foregoing autobiography traces minutely, and with fidelity, the inner life as well as the outward circumstances of William Capers, from infancy up to his thirty-first year. It lays bare the formative influences, parental, domestic, and educational, which produced the man. We are permitted to see the boy-impulses ripening into character and manners; the aspirations of ambitious youth; the providential ordering of early circumstances so as to make them all converge upon the great life-determining event—his conversion to God. Sharply defined, admitting of no after-doubt, the realized result of a Divine visitation, conferring

stable peace of mind and all the attributes of the renewed character, this grand crisis is the point of departure from which, having "broken with the world," his course of public usefulness began, enlarging into distinguished eminence, and terminating at length in the laurelled honors of a triumphant death, and a memory precious and embalmed in the affections of a sorrowing Church.

We are now to trace the incidents of a public life, extending from his thirty-first to his sixty-fifth year; crowded with labors and responsibilities; acted out in the presence of a great cloud of witnesses; touching the story of the Methodist Church at many vital points; illustrating the care of a watchful Providence; made signal by the presence of the paramount law of duty; displaying the "triple nobility of nature, culture, and faith;" lived out to its last act without fear and without reproach, and conferring upon society advantages, moral and spiritual, of the highest worth. Whatever belonged to him of dignity, of unity of character, of lofty purpose, of sustained energy and activity: in a word, every element which contributed its force in winning the battle of life and achieving distinction, may be referred to the domination of the religious principle in his heart. The whole life, in its manifold relations, crowded with active engagements, brilliant in many of its passages, and not free from the touch of sorrow and the pressure of adversity, is formed on the grand *ideas* of religion. It is a noble development of the

true *theory* of life. The foundation-maxim of the whole was, that the value of any thing is the price it will bear in eternity. Steering steadily by the light of this guiding principle, nothing was trusted to the accidents of winds and waves; the right direction was always maintained, and the right port made at the end.

The Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church was organized in 1819, in the city of New York; and at the General Conference, held the next year, the constitution was amended, and branch societies were recommended to be formed in all the Annual Conferences. The first mission established was among the Wyandot Indians, a tribe in Ohio. The next was a mission to the Creek Indians, occupying, at that time, lands in Georgia and Alabama, east and west of the Chattahoochee river. At the session of the South Carolina Conference of 1821, Mr. Capers was selected by Bishop McKendree to set on foot this mission. Leaving his family in Savannah until April, Mr. Capers set out on horseback on an extensive tour of appointments, for the purpose of awakening public attention to the moral and religious improvement of this tribe of Indians, who occupied the western frontier of the Conference. Contributions were solicited for the purpose of erecting mission premises, and establishing a school; and the project, in the hands of so eloquent an advocate, met with general favor.

In April, six weeks after the birth of his daughter, Susan, now the wife of Prof. Stone, of Emory Col-

lege, he removed his family to Georgetown, South Carolina. Heavy rains had fallen, and rivers and creeks were swollen with freshets. Mr. Capers was driving the carriage containing his wife, children, and nurse; and coming to a long bridge, drove upon it without knowing that the farther end was washed away. Some workmen, however, happened to be near, and by their aid a bateau was brought up, and Mrs. Capers and the children were carried safely to land. Mr. Capers then loosed the horses, and sitting in the bateau, plunged them through, holding the reins. The carriage was then floated over without much damage. Farther on, a deep creek was passed by means of a floating log, over which the family were transported, while Mr. Capers swam the horses and carriage over.

On the 19th of August he left Augusta on his way to the Creek Indians. This tour was undertaken to ascertain whether they could be persuaded to receive missionaries among them, inasmuch as, some time previously, they had declined being thus served. At Clinton Mr. Capers was joined by Col. R. A. Blount, a personal friend, and an invaluable ally in this enterprise. The Governor of Georgia waited on him at Milledgeville, and tendered his official recommendation under the seal of the Executive Department. On the 29th, Col. Blount and he set out on horseback, each with a blanket, great-coat, umbrella, saddlebags, and wallet. They carried sugar and coffee; and on one side of Mr. Capers's saddle hung a coffee-pot, on the other a tin-

cup. They entered the Creek nation on the 1st of September. On the next day, Sunday, he preached the first missionary sermon ever heard in the then dreary country between the Flint and Chattahoochee rivers. This was at the house of a Mr. Spain; his congregation consisting of a few whites and blacks, and five Indians. The text was appropriate: "The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles: The people which sat in darkness saw great light, and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up." The next day they reached the house of a Mr. Porter, and the day following passed five or six miles up the river, through rich, low grounds. Here they reached Coweta, the principal part of the town lying on the east side of the Chattahoochee. Crossing the ferry, they entered the public square, where they found Col. McIntosh, one of the chiefs. Mr. Capers gave him some letters, and was told that an interview would be afforded him on the next morning.

Here he witnessed an Indian ball-play. As one of the principal sports of savage life, Mr. Capers's description of it may interest the reader: "There now arrived a company of players, who, upon coming up to the square, raised a yell, and ran furiously around, whooping and yelling, with short, exact pauses as they ran—every individual changing his voice and pausing simultaneously. I confess I felt what might be called a fine effect. Waugh,

waugh, waugh, distinctly hallooed by an hundred loud voices, every one breathing a like sound at the same breath, and pausing between the repetition just long enough for the full play of the lungs upon the sound that should follow; and the deep, full sound of waugh, suddenly, but with the nicest precision, lifted into a most piercing yell—and this, in turn, changed for a softer note—and then all alternated, produced a pleasurable amazement. I could not but observe how well adapted was the arrangement of the sounds, and the time they were uttered in, to produce the loudest effort of the voice with the least fatigue. This exercise was called a challenge, and I suppose those who performed it were to act together in the play. They had reduced their dress to a single piece of blue or red woollen cloth, thirty or forty inches long and eight wide, passing closely under the body, and supported by a strong string about the waist, the ends falling over the string and forming a flap before and behind. These flaps were narrowed down to four inches width, or tapered to a point, and bound with green, red, or yellow ferretting, according to the taste and ability of the wearer. It is the only garment that modesty obliged an Indian to wear. Fastened under the string that supports this nameless covering, from the bottom of the back rising upwards to the shoulder-blade, the more highly ornamented players wore a tail of the tiger, or fox, or wolf, or furs twisted together so as to resemble this; and sometimes a single

feather, or a mop of them, taken from the goose, or cock, or owl, substituted a plume. These, with wide woollen garters, earrings, and a little paint or soot blotched upon the face, dressed them to their highest wishes.

"But more remarkable than even their undress or their music, was the wonderful manner of their running round a small tree during the challenge. Huddled together within a diameter of thirty or forty feet, every individual was in rapid motion, without contracting or extending the circle, and with such regularity that those nearest the centre never jostled each other. Their regularity was like the wheeling of a platoon, and the swiftness of their motion like a wheel upon its axle.

"The challenge over, they went off separately, and we soon after followed to the place of their amusement. It was a level but not very open piece of mixed woods, about three hundred yards distant from the square. We were quite in time to observe all the preparation for the play. Two small saplings, at their base four feet apart, and inclined outwards at top, were stuck into the earth at either end of the ball-ground, a distance of one hundred and fifty yards. Just beyond, at the nearer pair of poles, a company of players were irregularly tossing and catching a ball with their sticks; and nearer us the women and children were squatted about, listlessly waiting the play. A number of Indians (and the number constantly increasing) were lounging all about us. Here was

Tustunnuggee Hopoi (the Little Prince) and McIntosh; the one sitting on the bare ground, with his back supported against a tree; the other lying at full length, undistinguished among the herd of loiterers. I was surprised to observe them neither better dressed nor more attended than the rest. Hopoi's countenance was more in character than his apparel; but McIntosh, with a shrewder look, that would seem to hide himself, discovered nothing of the chief about him.

"Here and there I could observe one proposing a wager. A pair of bells, tobacco, and some money were exposed for betting; but bets were not frequent. The hurried action of the increased company of players, apprised us that the play would soon commence. Now the opposite company of players were discovered beyond the farther pair of poles. A well-dressed Indian, mounted on a good pony, galloped hastily along the ground from party to party, as if to arrange for their coming together. Immediately those I had first observed huddled themselves for the challenge. This was begun a little beyond and to the left of the poles, and continued as at the square, only that the group maintained a direction toward the poles at the same time with their swift vertical running. When opposite the poles, their opponents exhibited the same manœuvre, and then, with the wildest gesticulation and great clamor, both parties ran together.

"Lovett had placed himself midway between the poles, and served as the pivot on which the whole

seemed to turn for five minutes; while their whoops and yells (measured and alternated as before, but with redoubled violence) roused the whole concourse of spectators to their feet. A pause ensued. The equal number of the parties was ascertained by their laying down in opposite rows their ball-sticks. These resemble a battledoor, only that the hooped end of the stick is not so broad, and, instead of being overlaid with parchment, has only a few slack strings drawn across the hoop, close enough to retain the ball, and not so slack as to entangle it. There were one hundred and fifty pair of sticks, and these ascertained to be equally divided, seventy-five players being on either side.

"The parties having been found equal, each took up their sticks, and placed themselves promiscuously about the ground, the greater number standing near the centre. Every countenance was expressive of eager expectation until the ball was tossed up and the play began. Either party strove against the other to throw the ball between an opposite pair of poles, for which purpose the sticks only were to be used. Their dexterity in this, and their adroitness in foiling each other, were indeed surprising. As soon as either party had succeeded to throw the ball between the poles, another was tossed up from the centre of the ground; and their violent exercise, without the slightest intermission, was continued nearly three hours. Each party had gained the ball seventeen times, when the dusk of evening concluded their unfinished

game. McIntosh signified to them that they should desist, and placed himself for their rallying-point, round which their shouts and yells were bellowed forth with more breath than ever; and they all dispersed.

"It would be difficult to tell the feelings under which my mind labored through the scenes of this day. I hope I have never been insensible to the moral condition of the heathen; and since my appointment as the Conference missionary, it has employed my thoughts and my care far more than formerly. I had read something and imagined more, but the scene was laid at too great a distance. I had not supposed that so close at the door of civilized man—just beyond sight of the Bible and the sound of our sacred services—there could exist so gross a state of human degradation. The evidence of my own senses, in the sudden, shameful scene at the river, amazed and dejected me; and now, that for four long hours I had witnessed the whole parade of whooping and yelling, of paint and nakedness, I had scarcely any spirit left."

They passed the night at Noble Kennard's, one of the head men at Coweta, and brother-in-law of McIntosh, who had distinguished himself in the late war. The next morning McIntosh, accompanied with Lovett as an interpreter, waited on Mr. Capers. He was a half-breed, understood English very well, and had served under Gen. Jackson in the Seminole war in 1818. Indian etiquette required, however, that he should communicate with

Mr. Capers only through an interpreter. He introduced the conversation by saying that he had come as he had promised, and waited to hear what was to be said. Mr. Capers replied that he came only on the errand of charity, as the agent of the Church, and under the patronage of government. The government wished to better the condition of the Indians by having their children instructed, and the Churches felt it their sacred duty to go forward in this good work; that neither their money nor their lands were sought, but only an opportunity to do them good; that for eight months he had been employed in preaching and making collections to defray the expenses of a school, and was ready to introduce one among them; that, to assure the chiefs of his good intentions, and the benevolence of the Church he represented, he had letters from Gov. Clark, and from Generals Meriwether, McIntosh, and Mitchell, of Georgia, all which Col. Blount would read to him; and that he had also a letter from Mr. Calhoun, Secretary of War, to Mr. Crowell, their agent; and, finally, that he had committed to writing the substance of what he had to propose to the chiefs. McIntosh wished to hear the letters read, and the paper that contained the "talk" to the chiefs, saying at the same time that neither he nor the chiefs then at Coweta could conclude any thing on the business, but must wait a General Council of all the chiefs of the nation, without which, and the consent of the agent, no white man could be permitted to live among them. The papers were

accordingly read by Col. Blount; after which McIntosh signified his approval of the proposed object, and appeared pleased with the conditions specified. He suggested that the papers should be confided to Lovett until the meeting of the Council, which he assured Mr. Capers should be held as soon as possible after the agent's return.

In October Mr. Capers made a second visit to the Creeks, accompanied by the Rev. C. G. Hill, who had been selected to reside in the nation in the event of a successful application. The National Council was held early in November, and the articles of agreement submitted were accepted by the chiefs. Mr. Hill was left to board with Lovett, and Mr. Capers set out immediately for Augusta to procure supplies and employ workmen; having shown address equal to his zeal in managing a negotiation peculiarly difficult under the circumstances. On his way back he attended a camp-meeting in Jones county. The transition from an Indian council to a camp-meeting awakened strong emotions in him; he describes his feelings in the following paragraph: "It was night, and I had lost my way, but my mind was intent upon the meeting. I was hasting to forget the vulgar scenes of savage life in the solemn services of our Immanuel. I was prepared to admire the illuminated ground, the multitude of worshippers, the order of the encampment, when, at 8 o'clock in the evening, I reached this happy place. 'Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord!' Blessed be God who hath

made us such a nation! Here are they who love and serve the Saviour. Here the hard heart is broken, and the penitent rejoice. The Church exults in Christ—Christ owns the Church. I too will rejoice in this great mercy. When shall all flesh see the salvation of God? When shall the now imbruted Indian 'call Jesus Lord by the Holy Ghost?' Christians, by all the blessings you enjoy, charge yourselves to pray and care for these."

In the course of the next year, mission premises were erected one mile west of the Chattahoochee, not far from Coweta. The station was named after the venerable Asbury, and was served by the Rev. Isaac Smith, the appointment of Mr. Capers as superintendent being continued. Opposition, however, soon showed itself. One of the chiefs, Big Warrior, openly avowed himself hostile to the work of preaching the gospel among the Indians. Some degraded white men, who lived on the outskirts of the nation, in the "back-water" of the stream of civilization, encouraged this opposition. The agent had little use for *preachers*, though he did not so far violate the instructions of the Secretary of War as to oppose the school project. In the face of these discouragements Mr. Smith opened a school consisting of twelve Indian children. The number doubled itself in a week. And during the five or six years of its continuance, until the removal of the Creeks beyond the Mississippi, the mission school varied from thirty-five to fifty scholars in regular attendance. The progress of

the children in learning was satisfactory, although the Creek nation was considered inferior in intelligence to their neighbors, the Cherokees. There is preserved in the museum of Wofford College a memento of the capabilities of the Indian boys. It is a copy, in Roman letters, of one of the Methodist hymns, commencing:

"Come, thou Omniscient Son of man,"

which was made in the presence of Mr. Smith, by an Indian lad, nearly grown up, who came in 1822 to the mission school, and requested to be taken as a scholar. The school was pretty full, and the missionaries did not prefer to take so large a pupil. To make a favorable impression of his abilities, he went to a desk and copied, without knowing a letter, the hymn aforementioned. The specimen of native genius thus executed is highly creditable, and the boy was admitted.

The United States Government, wisely, and in accordance with the wishes of the great body of the American people, made, at that period of the history of Indian affairs, an annual appropriation of ten thousand dollars, for the purpose of aiding in the civilization of the Indian tribes. In 1824 appropriations were made to twenty educational establishments, principally Presbyterian and Baptist, set on foot for the improvement of the Indians; among these there was one of five hundred dollars made to the Mission Committee of the Ohio Conference, in behalf of the mission school

among the Wyandots. From first to last, the Asbury mission school among the Creeks received not a dollar of the government appropriations. The whole burden of sustaining it was met by voluntary contributions within the limits of the South Carolina Conference—then embracing Georgia. Mr. Capers gave his full strength and time, during 1821 and 1822, to the task of soliciting these contributions. A gratifying success attended his efforts, though they involved protracted absences from his family, and much fatigue and exposure in horseback travelling, and no small amount of preaching. His noble devotion to the cause of missions, illustrated by the whole course of his life, has left its impress on the Conference of which he was a distinguished member. Several of the sermons preached by him in the course of these two years, were regarded at the time as among the most powerful efforts of the American pulpit.

During the two following years, Mr. Capers was stationed at Milledgeville, Georgia, and continued Superintendent of the Asbury Mission. His family had spent the former part of 1822 in Sumter District, South Carolina, at the residence of the Rev. T. D. Glenn, a brother-in-law; and the latter part of the year in the hospitable mansion of his early and long-continued friend, John H. Mann, Esq., of Augusta, Georgia. At Milledgeville there was no parsonage; but Governor Clark, whose wife was a Methodist lady, having moved to a summer retreat at Scottsboro', a short distance from Mil-

ledgeville, his residence, handsomely furnished, was kindly put at the disposal of the stewards for Mr. Capers's purposes. In the course of the year a parsonage was built and well furnished, and Mr. Capers moved into it in 1824. The location proved to be unhealthy, and the children were sick with bilious fever. On the 15th October, his little daughter, Esther Anslie, died. His daughter Susan was so ill that all hope of her recovery was given up. On Sunday morning, the Methodist church, being the only one open at that time, was crowded. As the time for Divine service approached, a painful conflict arose in Mr. Capers's mind, between the sense of duty to a large congregation, and the distressing apprehensions of a father's feelings that his child would die while he was absent. His hesitation was only for a moment. Kneeling by her bed he committed her case to God, took leave of her, and went to the church. Just then, the family physician, Dr. Williamson, came in, and after administering some medicine, had the pleasure to witness a speedy change for the better in the sick child. The Doctor told Mrs. Capers that he would relieve Mr. Capers's mind by announcing the change to him; and accordingly went into the church, and quietly approaching the pulpit, interrupted the sermon for a moment by whispering the pleasing intelligence. The painful emotion of the audience, all of whom knew the fact of the child's extreme illness, was immediately relieved by a brief announcement of the news brought

him by the physician. He resumed his sermon with a deepened throb of gratitude to God, and with powerful effect upon the listeners. He preached again, in the afternoon, and at night; and the pulpit ministrations of that day, which had risen in such gloom over the pastor's family, were memorable as the means of conversion to several persons, and of great spiritual good to many others.

During most of the time his Sunday's work was a sunrise sermon at the Penitentiary, and three services at his own church, besides administering catechetical instruction to the children, in the intervals of public worship. God was with him, and made his labors a blessing to many souls. He enjoyed the respect and confidence of the community, and left the people of his charge with deep and mutual regrets at parting. He had attended, in May, the session of the General Conference held at Baltimore, as one of the delegates of the South Carolina Conference.

CHAPTER II.

Stationed in Charleston—Editor of the Wesleyan Journal—Appointed Presiding Elder—Defence of Bishop Soule's Sermon—Elected Delegate to the British Conference.

From Milledgeville Mr. Capers was removed to Charleston, South Carolina. In this station there were three churches of respectable size, and a small chapel in the suburbs—all united in one pastoral charge, which was placed in the hands of Mr. Capers. The South Carolina Conference at that time extended from the Cape Fear river to Alabama. This large field was divided into eight Presiding Elders' Districts, and embraced a membership, white and colored, of forty-two thousand. In the city of Charleston, there were in the communion of the Methodist Episcopal Church four hundred and thirty-one whites, and two thousand seven hundred and forty-seven colored. The colleagues of Mr. Capers were the Rev. Messrs. Manly, Hoskins, and Olin. The health of Mr. Olin was bad, and he was able to do no pastoral work; indeed, it was only with the hope that he might have sufficient strength to edit the Wesleyan Journal, that he had been again stationed in Charleston after the failure of his health during the year pre-

ceding. The labors of a preacher in charge in Charleston prior to the separation of the charges, were severe indeed. He was liable to be called upon at every hour of the day; every evening was occupied with an official meeting or in public worship; and besides three sermons on Sunday, he had on his hands the administration of the affairs of a society numbering upwards of three thousand souls. All this was enough to tax to the utmost the capabilities, mental and physical, of any man. The parsonage-house was a small wooden building, erected in the time of Bishop Asbury, terribly hot in summer, and with few conveniences in its fixtures. Mr. Capers occupied this house two years, preaching regularly three times on Sunday, and discharging the other duties of his office.

On the 1st of October, 1825, the Wesleyan Journal made its *débût*. It was the second Methodist paper published in the United States. It had been projected by Mr. Olin, and adopted by the Conference, which made provisional arrangements for its publication under the editorial supervision of Mr. Capers, in case Mr. Olin's health did not permit him to undertake its management. As there was no prospect that Mr. Olin's services could be put in requisition, the Journal was brought out, at the date aforementioned, by Mr. Capers. In making his editorial salutations to the patrons of the Wesleyan Journal, Mr. Capers said: "We feel the want of Mr. Olin keenly, but we cannot shrink from the performance of a duty which, without our choice,

is thus providentially cast upon us. We use no disguise. The Wesleyan Journal, in our hands, cannot and will not pretend to learning. We confess we know not how to gauge the ancients; nor can we fix the measure of the moderns. We profess, however, to have measured ourselves. We have been schooled in common life, and claim the advantage of common sense; and without affecting what transcends our stature, we will use our middling, common-sense ability, to as great advantage as we can. We honor learning, and suppose we can distinguish her fine gold from tinsel pedantry. We admire wit and genius; but there is a little limping, waggish fellow, whom we will not know. We labor to promote the interests of religion, and we wish to do it as religious men. We will 'follow after things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.'"

It is matter of surprise that Mr. Capers should have consented to assume, in addition to pastoral and pulpit labors already taxing his full strength, the responsibilities and cares peculiar to the editor's chair. Especially, with a quick sensibility, a nervous temperament, keen to feel the sting of a thousand petty annoyances which bristle around the tripod; with a training that went altogether in the direction of extemporaneous address, and not exercised in written composition; with meagre resources in the way of exchanges; with no corps of pledged or paid correspondents;—that, in spite of all these embarrassments, he should have cheer-

fully accepted the task put upon him by his brethren, is a high proof of unselfish devotion to the interests of the Church. The Journal, in his hands, exhibited a steady loyalty to the central truths of Christianity; his selections were mainly from the writings of Wesley and Fletcher, lacking variety perhaps, and of a cast somewhat too didactic, but meant chiefly for religious edification; and his editorials were brief, but bold to censure what he deemed worthy of rebuke.

In September of the following year, the Christian Advocate was issued from the Book Room, at New York, under the editorship of Mr. Badger, who had relinquished the editorial management of Zion's Herald in Boston, the first Methodist paper published in this country. At the session of the South Carolina Conference, at the close of 1826, resolutions were adopted, instructing the Publishing Committee of the Wesleyan Journal to negotiate with the Book Agents at New York for a union of the two papers. The reasons alleged for this course, were, 1st. The desirableness of patronizing a paper the profits of which were distributed equally among all the Annual Conferences of the Connection; 2d. The general desire for a Connectional paper; and 3d. An apprehension of damage from the multiplication of local presses. Accordingly, arrangements were made by which the Wesleyan Journal was merged in the Christian Advocate, which thence bore the title, "Christian Advocate and Journal."

Mr. Capers maintained throughout the two years his position as an able, eloquent, and popular preacher; though he was able to visit his flock but little. The four years succeeding were spent on the Charleston District, in the office of Presiding Elder. Removing his family to a residence in Coming street, he entered with fine spirits upon the duties of his new office. The district over which he presided embraced the scope of country lying between Santee and Savannah rivers, and extending from Charleston to the neighborhood of Columbia. He had been relieved from the confinement and worry of editing the Journal, and was allowed to breathe free amidst the solitudes of the grand old woods. The affairs of the district were administered with the punctuality and ability which belonged to his character; and his preaching attracted large crowds at his Quarterly Meetings. In the spring of 1827, at a camp-meeting held some twelve or fourteen miles above Charleston, he preached a most masterly and impressive sermon, on the text, "Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see," etc. His main positions were, that Christianity furnishes in its gracious provisions a divine power to meet the moral necessities of human nature; and that in the application and realization of this power, stands an irrefragable evidence, to the renewed soul, of the divinity and truth of the gospel. He went into no deep and curious speculation in regard to the *modus* of that spiritual influence of which he was discours-

ing; nor did he seek to settle with metaphysical acuteness the precise border lines between this mighty and mysterious power, and the moral agency over which it is never wont to break with irresistible flow of energy. But grouping together the undeniable facts of human nature in its relations to God, moral government, and the eternal state—its blindness, callousness, alienation; its profound torpor, on its religious side, contrasted with its vigor, vivacity, and depth of susceptibility on its earthly side—he made out the case of man's spiritual necessities and moral predicament, with a compactness of thought and a fervor of soul which poured itself forth in the most graphic, fresh, and telling illustrations. Having clearly delineated the necessities which occasioned the Divine mercy in redemption by Jesus Christ, he went on to show how precisely the elements entering into the scheme of recovery met the wants of man. As he set forth the "Spirit of life in Christ Jesus," as the great healing, saving *power*, he rose into a strain of eloquent speech, which stirred the blood as with a clarion's notes. At his master-touch, the shams of mere ritualism, the plausibilities of a so-called liberal Christianity, the religionism of the picturesque and the sentimental, faded into thin air. He showed how utterly insufficient was the whole troop of them to meet the solemn exigences of the case; and how above them all towered in majestic grandeur the *saving power* of the gospel. "Power, power!" he exclaimed, in a voice, at its full thun-

der, rolling flame-girt words over the assembled thousands around him: "you offer me a religion; I demand, can it open the blind eyes of my soul to the interests of my eternity? Can it invest with reality to my convictions the things of faith? Can it unstop my deaf ears to the voice of God and duty? Can it waft the spirit of health, and life, and love, to my disordered, leprous soul? Can it raise me from the death of sin to the life of righteousness?" He held that no power of man, or of education, of outward circumstances, or of inward resolution, could avail. What the soul wanted and must have, was just what Christ and the gospel offered—*Divine power*. And now, as nothing but a true religion could bestow such an investiture of the spirit, so the realization of its mighty and saving results in the spiritual nature was, in turn, the most valid and effective of proofs that Christ is the Son of God, and his gospel the word of truth as well as of salvation. This position was maintained with a force and clearness in keeping with the former part of the sermon. The usual fluency, elegance, and facility of the preacher, were on this occasion merged in an extraordinary strength—even vehemence, which ranked the sermon among the noblest specimens of pulpit oratory.

At the session of the South Carolina Conference held in Augusta, January, 1827, Bishop Soule preached a masterly sermon on the "Perfect Law of Liberty." By a resolution moved by Mr. Capers, and seconded by Mr., now Bishop, Andrew, the

Conference unanimously and earnestly requested its publication. When it appeared in print, it was reviewed in a series of articles written by a Presbyterian minister of some pretensions, and published in the Charleston Observer. More ado was made concerning this review than its actual merits warranted. It was a palpably unfair attempt to convict the Bishop of heresy—of holding a system of doctrine "dangerously and ruinously false!" The *gist* of this false teaching was the proposition maintained by Bishop Soule, that man, being redeemed by the death of Christ, is not held obliged to the performance of the Adamic law, *as a condition of life;* but that his relations to God are so far affected by the covenant of grace as that, instead of being under the original law, "Do this and live," the conditions are now, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." This sound and clearly defined principle, underlying the whole scheme of redemption by the sacrifice of Christ, was thought by the writer in the Observer to be equivalent to the proposition that "the gospel has released man from all obligation to speak right, to think right, or to feel right." And this was charged on the venerable Bishop.

Mr. Capers and Mr. Andrew, under their proper names, solicited, as an act of justice, the privilege of being heard in vindication of the Bishop's sermon, in the paper which had assailed it; but being refused, they published a pamphlet containing six letters to the editor of the Observer. These were

written by Mr. Capers. They were sufficiently caustic. He was not given to dandling on the knees of loving professions, opponents whom the defence of his own Church called him to withstand, point to point, and opinion against opinion. In this case, the absurdities of the reviewer might safely have been left to find their way into a speedy oblivion. It may be remarked, however, that Mr. Capers, though quick to resent what he conceived to be an unjustifiable attack on the principles of revealed truth, was yet far removed from the position of a controversialist preacher. He agreed with his friend Dr. Olin, in the conviction that controversies about the opinions which divide the Christian sects that preach and experience salvation by the blood of the Lamb and through the sanctification of the Spirit, are apt to be productive of evil rather than good; that more is lost to kind and Christian feeling than is gained to orthodoxy; and that when differences of opinion cannot be settled to the satisfaction of the litigant parties by the Bible itself, the last appeal, it is not wise to excite and perpetuate passions which are fatal to Christian character, with the uncertain hope of extirpating errors which the narrowest charity does not regard as barriers to salvation. And there have been few preachers of eminence whose ministry was more catholic in its tone than that of Dr. Capers, or embraced a larger circle of admirers beyond the pale of their own denominations.

In the autumn of 1827, the family of Mr. Capers

were visited by yellow fever. He was very ill for several weeks; his brother LeGrand, and his daughters Anna and Susan, being attacked at the same time. Shortly afterwards, Mrs. Capers was taken down. The kindest attentions possible were shown the afflicted family. Mrs. J. O. Andrew took the youngest child; Dr. Dickson, the family physician, took the eldest son, Francis; both of whom, by this kind intervention of attached friends, escaped. By the blessing of God, all who had been sick recovered. Mr. Capers, as soon as his strength allowed, resumed his labors on the district.

In May, 1828, he attended the session of the General Conference, held at Pittsburg. On the 14th of May he wrote to Mrs. Capers as follows:— "I have been greatly pressed with a solicitation from many brethren to suffer myself to be considered a candidate for the place of Agent of the Book Concern, insomuch that at one time I was even induced to yield a reluctant consent; but to-day I have strongly declined it, and think that I shall be able with a good conscience to avoid the nomination, which had been pretty far concluded. The prospect, however, is considerably on the other side, of my being sent as the Representative of the Church in America to that in Great Britain. Nothing conclusive has transpired on this subject, but you know the grounds on which I should not be free to excuse myself, if the General Conference elect me. Bishop Hedding, this day, took an

opportunity privately to explain why he had preferred another; and was pleased to say that it was not in the least owing to any want of respect for me, but only because he thought my circumstances, as the owner of slaves, would render my appointment unpleasant in some sections where there exist strong prejudices on the subject of such circumstances. Even if the General Conference should put this duty upon me, I suppose I may be able to see you before I go to fulfil it. There will be no new Bishops made at this Conference. We move very slowly in our business, owing to the great number of members, say, one hundred and seventy-seven, all of them speakers by profession, and many very fond of talking."

It is proper to state that the General Conference of 1824 had instructed the Bishops to choose and appoint a Representative, and send him to the British Conference in 1826. A meeting of the Bishops had been held at Baltimore, in April, 1826, and Bishops McKendree and Soule had supported the appointment of Mr. Capers; Bishops George and Hedding wished Dr. Fisk appointed. This difference of opinion had led to the postponement of the election until the meeting of the General Conference, when the subject was formally brought up in the address of the Bishops.

The biographer of Bishop Hedding states, that the ground of his objection was that Mr. Capers was a slaveholder. He adds that the intelligent reader will infer that "the aggressive movements

of slavery, which finally led to the disruption of the Church, were not wholly without Episcopal sanction at a very early date." While it may require some extraordinary intelligence to perceive how *slavery* was making any movement at all, we are willing to accept the *fact* that the senior Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the venerable McKendree, with his able and far-sighted colleague Bishop Soule, did maintain as far back as 1826, the *equality* of the Southern ministry in the Connectional union. If this was a *pro-slavery* movement, then let it be observed that the General Conference of 1828 *endorsed* the action and reasons of the two Bishops by *electing* a slaveholder as their Representative. The ingenuity of Quarterly Reviewers can readily distort this fact into another proof that the Methodist Episcopal Church has always been abolitionist.

On May 17th, Mr. Capers wrote the following brief letter to his wife:

"I have been this day elected to the undesirable distinction of being the Representative of the American Methodist Church to that of Great Britain. I could not decline being a candidate, for reasons which you know; and besides the important principle, involving the interests generally of all the Southern preachers, I could not decline because of the unpleasant dilemma in which it would have placed those of the Bishops who had so perseveringly maintained my nomination. I still hope, but cannot even now be certain, that I

may see you before I go to England. If practicable, you may be sure I will go to Charleston before I set out for Liverpool; and if so, I shall be in haste, and will probably be with you by the last of the first week in June."

On the 19th May, he says: "I this morning obtained the consent of the General Conference to my absence during the remainder of its session, with a view to my being enabled to go to Charleston. I expect to take the stage for Baltimore tomorrow night—no stage going earlier; will probably reach there on the night of the 23d inst.; and will then be governed by circumstances whether I go by sea or land to Charleston. Our Conference has been more harmonious than had been expected. We have done little that affects the rules of Discipline; but I think the session now present has done much of great importance to the Church in her present circumstances."

After spending a week or two with his family, he sailed for New York, where he arrived on the 18th June. Here he met Bishop George, obtained his instructions, and engaged a passage to Liverpool in the packet-ship "John Jay." In a letter to Mrs. Capers, he says: "I have received the kindest attentions from all who have come in my way. Be not jealous of me for saying this. My home is in Charleston still. My children are there; and above every thing and everybody else, my wife is there. I wish I could give you but one more kiss before I leave my country for a foreign land. I

now can only tell you so; and to-morrow I shall not have the liberty of even so much as this. But don't mind it. Remember your confidence in prayer, and know that even here, where I am a stranger, there are many and mighty prayers put up for me. I wish you could have heard, last night, how brother Waugh, concluding the service after I had preached, prayed for me, and for you, and our dear children also; and how many loud amens rung through the church. I had a blessed day yesterday—Sunday the 22d. My mouth was opened, and my heart enlarged, and the large congregations seemed to feel pretty generally a correspondent interest in the services. As I said before, so let me repeat: we know not what the Divine will may be; but let us lose ourselves in God, and we shall infallibly come out on the right and best side. If we fully purpose in our hearts that 'whether we live, we live unto the Lord, or whether we die, we die unto the Lord,' he will take care, our conduct being consistent, that 'we live and die the Lord's.' No accident, no danger, no enemies, can have power over us; but in all places and at all times, we shall be safe with Him.

'Jesus protects: my fears, begone!
What can the Rock of Ages move?
Safe in thy arms I lay me down,
Thy everlasting arms of love.'

Only think, my dear, that the Lord of heaven and earth should have come down to us in the form of our species, and walked upon the water, to teach

us not to fear! He who made the winds and seas, will in answer to the prayers of his people, and for his mercy's sake, be everywhere present along the whole course of our ship over the ocean, from New York to Liverpool, and back again to Charleston. He made the elements, and he controls them. And even if it should seem good to him to stop our progress, and bring us back no more, still you may not say we were lost at sea—none can be lost in God's hands. We are all mortal, and we all must die. But with respect to myself, surely the apparent danger of death is much greater in the usual course of duty on the Charleston District, than on the ocean. I feel a great desire, an earnest longing, to be more fully given up to God, and to be filled with the Spirit. Pray that I may be brought into a state of deep and uninterrupted communion with him. It is no easy matter for one in so elevated and responsible a station as I am now to sustain for a little while, and in such circumstances as I shall be put into on board ship and in England, to acquit himself acceptably and to the profit of the Church. Most truly I feel that I am not sufficient for these things; but blessed be God, there is ample sufficiency even for me, in Christ Jesus my Lord. To him, and him alone, I would look for aid, and depend on him with confidence for support. Bishop Hedding has just come in to take tea with me. The Bishop has put up another heavenly prayer for us by name. What a privilege this is!—that even we are borne on the

hearts of so many before God, is surely cause for thanksgiving. Perhaps a thousand faithful prayers, or thousands of them, have been offered up, and will be offered up, for us and our children, which we never should have had but for the cross which is now laid upon us. May God hear and answer them for his name's sake."

CHAPTER III.

Embarks in the "John Jay"—Voyage—Reception in England—Estimate of the leading Wesleyan preachers—Resolutions of the British Conference in acknowledgment of the visit of the American Representative—Visits Dr. A. Clarke at Haydon Hall—Return voyage.

MR. CAPERS embarked, June 24th, on the John Jay, one of the Liverpool "liners." In the harbor off the lighthouse, he wrote to his wife the following letter:

"I came down to the Battery this morning, at a quarter before ten o'clock, and found Bishops George and Hedding there, with a number of the brethren; among whom were Dr. Emory, brother Matthias, Captain Wood, brother Dando, etc., all waiting to take leave of me, and look after me, as I should depart for the ship. I ought to have particularly mentioned brother Francis Hall, a distinguished member of the Church in New York, his wife, and his son and wife, among the number of those who put themselves to the trouble of a long walk to show this delicate mark of respect and love to the Representative of their Church—poor unworthy me! Brother Hall has even come on board the ship, and is going out to sea, to return with the

pilot, to have, he says, the last of my presence in the port. By him I have an opportunity of sending this to you. Several of the preachers came down to the ship with me, in the steamboat from the city to the quarantine ground, and returned by the same conveyance. Well, I am now actually off for Liverpool. Wife and children, friends and country are behind me. God is with me; and with him I must do well. The number of passengers is but twelve, and there are but two ladies. The captain has given me a proof of his kind regards, exchanging my state-room for one in the ladies' cabin. Here, in the best part of the ship, I have a splendid little room to myself, large enough for my baggage, a table, and a chair, where I may be as private as I please. This letter is written in it, and the writing of it is my first employment on board ship. Farewell, my dear, dear wife; keep your heart from fear and trouble. Expect me at home again, safe and happy."

This farewell letter was forwarded by Mr. Hall.

His next letter to Mrs. Capers was dated off Dungaroon, on the coast of Ireland, July 15:

"A voyage across the Atlantic ocean could scarcely be made with more comfort and satisfaction than I have experienced on the present one. We have not had an hour's head-wind since we set sail at New York; and for a fortnight the weather was so smooth that a common six-oared boat might have been perfectly safe on the roughest water we expe-

rienced. The last six days have given us a rapid run, averaging nearly or quite two hundred miles a day; and this morning, at about 5 o'clock, we came up to the coast of Ireland. We have been all day gliding smoothly, with light winds, along her beautiful shores, within full sight of lighthouses, forts, towers, towns, villages, mansions, and fields of lovely green, bordered out with their fences of hawthorn, like a vast garden covering all the country. To-morrow will make three weeks since I left New York, and behold I am actually here already! I know that it is Ireland that I am beholding, and still I cannot realize that I am three thousand miles from home. My voyage seems a dream.

"Wednesday night, July 16. — We are now going over on the English side of the St. George's or Irish channel, and expect to see the coast of England as early as it is light in the morning. The coast of Ireland, along which we were sailing yesterday, and until 3 o'clock to-day, is beautiful beyond any thing you ever saw. Believe me, I felt every hour a tender sense of interest in it that I never knew before, because of its being the land of your forefathers.

"Liverpool, July 17 — During the night we crossed the channel, and this morning at 5 o'clock were in view of the isle of Anglesea. I was fortunate in having a fair, fine day to come into Liverpool, and I improved it as well as I could to view the coast from the north-western extremity of

Wales to this far-famed commercial emporium. Wales is nothing to compare to Ireland for beauty along this shore. It generally presents rugged and bare old fields covered over with rocks; and it is only in detached places that a few beautiful farms, clustered on a better soil, show a highly cultivated as well as a very old country. You never see woodland, either here or on the coast of Ireland, except it be attached to some lordly estate as a pleasure-ground or park. I really thought, when I looked with enthusiasm upon the beautiful shores of Ireland, that I could scarcely find it equalled in England; but the scenery along the shore of the country from the river Dee to this place, and particularly that which lies on the Liverpool side of the river Mersey, is beautiful beyond Ireland, and beyond any idea that I could give you of it. We arrived at the dock in Liverpool at half-past one o'clock to-day, having made our passage in twenty-two and a half days from New York. We found that the ship Helen Mar, the Majestic, the Olive and Eliza, and the General Brown, from Charleston, had arrived here before us; and this determines me to return direct to Charleston, if I can find a good ship, on my way home. I must here, in gratitude and duty, set down the kind, friendly, and obliging attentions which I have received from Captain Holdrege. On all the voyage he was every way a friend; and his attentions since we came into port have been even more obliging, if possible, than on board his ship. I think I said something

about the ship before I left New York. I need add no more than just this: that a better vessel, or a finer one, I never expect to sail in. Our fare on the passage was equal to the elegant and splendid style of the ship. We had bread baked on board every day, and that which was excellent; our dinner always consisted of several courses of meats, served in the handsomest manner, desserts of various kinds, and even fruits and nuts. Cider (just such as I was dreaming of in the yellow fever) that sparkled like champagne, various French and other wines, porter, etc., were at all hours as readily at command as water. Indeed, there was every thing that I could wish, and very much more. I have not yet delivered my letters of introduction, having put up for a time under the wing of Captain Holdrege, and in company with several of my fellow-passengers, whose society has been one of the pleasantest accompaniments of one of the pleasantest voyages that could have been made by me going so far from home.

"Liverpool, July 19.—Mr. Newton was most of the day yesterday walking with me. I had stopped at the Star and Garter Hotel until I should get clear of the custom-house, before introducing myself to any one here. He was the first of our brethren whom I saw, and immediately joined himself with me for the day, taking a great deal of fatigue, with the kindest possible dispositions to show me honor and to serve me. He would be with me at the dock, at the custom-house; secured

me splendid accommodations, and dined with me, at the dwelling of Mr. Sands, (a wealthy and very respectable merchant;) procured such pecuniary accommodations as I wanted, and, indeed, put himself, and *would* put himself, to a deal of trouble for me. During the day and evening I have had the pleasure of the company of several of the preachers. This morning I would attend the preachers' weekly meeting, but business and company yesterday and last night hindered me from writing, and I must be in time with this for the earliest ship, so I give myself to my dear, dear wife. I could tell you a thousand things, and will when I get home again. I am as happy as the richest and kindest accommodations, and the most tender, respectful attentions can make me, so far from home. But what would I give just that you might know that I am here in safety! What would I give to be again at my own plain home, with my business here accomplished! I must not indulge in this. I know that you are anxious, and, perhaps, even fearful. Let us trust in God, and we shall yet praise him again.

"You see I have been writing to you ever since the 15th. I hoped then I might find an earlier opportunity. This is Saturday the 19th. On Monday I will set out with Mr. Newton and Mr. Tobias for London."

On Sunday he preached for the Rev. Robert Newton in the morning, and in the afternoon for the Rev. Mr. Scott. In regard to his sermons he

says: "I was much confused in the morning, but less so in the afternoon. On the whole, I feel rather more courage and composure than I expected I should, and encourage myself to believe that I shall do better as I get more used to my new circumstances. In private and social intercourse I was never in my life more free, easy, and ready."

His next letter is dated London, July 24th:

"I left Liverpool in company with Messrs. Newton and Tobias on Monday last, the 21st, and reached London on Tuesday evening. Our road lay over the most beautiful country, perhaps, in the world, for most of the way; and, excepting ten or twelve miles, we travelled over all of it in the daytime. The part which we passed over in the night lies between Wolverhampton and Birmingham, a manufacturing district, where the whole country smokes and blazes with innumerable furnaces. It is remarkable that I should have had the night for this part of the road, where there is little of the elegance and beauty of the farming and grazing districts which compose all the rest of the distance. One thing only I regretted in it, (for under no circumstances could I have stopped to examine any thing,) and that was, that Wednesbury, so famous for its violence towards the first Methodist preachers, lay just at this part of our road; and, although I passed directly through it, I could see but very little of it. The blazing furnaces of this district have a strong effect at night. The manufactures are chiefly, if not entirely, of iron and steel. We

reached Birmingham after 10 o'clock P M., and passed the night there. In the morning at 7 o'clock we set out for London, and reached here at 7 o'clock in the evening. I was received with great kindness by Mr. Stephens, the President of the Conference; and having ascertained that Mr. Newton and myself were to stay with Lancelot Haslope, Esq., of Highbury Lodge, (the same who now stands in the stead of the late lamented Mr. Butterworth, as general Treasurer of the Missionary Society,) we came to our temporary home in the great metropolis without much delay.

"Yesterday I passed several hours with the stationing committee, who, it seems, do their work before the Conference begins. Mr. Reece and Mr. Hannah met me at the President's house with great affection, Mr. Reece saying in his peculiar way, as he pressed my hand long and tenderly, 'You know I always wanted *you* to come.' I was introduced by him, and shook hands with Mr. Bunting, Mr. Gaulter, Mr. Edmonston, Mr. Entwistle, Mr. Watson, Mr. Sutcliffe, and others. Mr. Moore, Dr. Clarke, and others whom I expect soon to see, were not present. Mr. Newton is the Apollos of the Wesleyan Methodists as a public speaker, and particularly so on the platform. His manners are very dignified, and yet exceedingly pleasant—converses freely, is very witty and full of anecdote, and is a finished gentleman as well as a very able man. Such a forehead as Mr. Watson's, I never looked at in my life. He is very thin and pale, with

a wan face, which looks even narrower than it might, on account of the unusual size of his forehead. Mr. Watson is rather above six feet high, but I suppose he would not weigh much, if any thing, more than I do. He is acknowledged on all hands to be the ablest man in the Connection. I would not have recognized Mr. Bunting from any likeness I have seen of him; indeed, he has too fine an eye to paint. His eye and Mr. Watson's forehead surpass every thing. Mr. Bunting is a great business man, and possesses an acuteness and quickness which such an eye as his must indicate. He is also very remarkable for his great superiority in extemporaneous speaking—his words and sentences always flowing as freely and gracefully off at hand, as if they had been chosen and arranged with the greatest care. He is all activity and energy in the great cause of Methodism, and is certainly one of the first of her sons. He is rather under height—perhaps not more than five feet eight inches—and is inclined to be fat. The likenesses of him hitherto taken will, I hope, soon give way to a better one; as he is expected to succeed the present President at the Conference about to be held, and it is a custom to have the likeness of every President taken. Mr. Edmonston, Mr. Entwistle, and Mr. Sutcliffe, particularly the two former, are also among the leading men. They all three are aged and venerable, with countenances of the utmost benignity.

"Friday, 25th.—It is really humbling to me to

receive the free and full and affectionate attentions which my present situation brings me, from men so long and so greatly venerated. I had not anticipated it. I never can feel that I am an equal in their presence, and yet I am beginning already to feel more at ease, as I am more in their society. This morning Mr. Reece introduced me to Mr. George Marsden, one of the oldest, best, and most respectable of this venerable body of men. As he took me by the hand, his eyes melted upon the words, 'How happy I am to see a representative of the Church in America!' I have not yet had an opportunity to see much of London, owing to the wetness of the weather, in part, but more to my being occupied with the committees, and not being able to go much abroad through this wilderness world of a city, for fear of losing myself. It requires great effort to keep my spirits up, my dear wife—I cannot feel at home. I really feel to sigh, in spite of myself, for the humbler scenes of South Carolina. Still, I hope that I am enabled by God's grace to sustain the character, responsible as it is, in which I have been sent by the American Church, so as not to lower the home and the Church I love so well, in the eyes of any. I am exceedingly anxious—too much so—and cannot be otherwise. May God be with me. Truly, if I know my heart, my eye is single, and always has been so.

"July 28.—To-day is Monday; and on yesterday I preached for the first time in this world of a town. The appointment was made for me in the

Great Queen Street Chapel, the largest and most splendid building that I ever saw as a Methodist church. No church of any order in Charleston can compare to it. Mr. Newton read prayers, which he does to perfection; and I preached, as well as I could, on Rom. x. 15. My heart was enlarged, and I had utterance for my feelings, if I had not much mind. Mr. Reece, Mr. Newton, and many other preachers were there; and I am thankful to know that they were satisfied with it. It was cheering to see tears in the eyes of such a man as Mr. Newton. 'I felt,' said he to me afterwards, 'that your Master was with you.' Yes, truly, God was with me; and I trust he will be with me to the end. O, how earnestly do I throw myself upon his gracious assistance! On Saturday I thought it advisable to make a sort of speech before the Book Committee, on the subject of a complete edition of Wesley's works; and there also before the President, Messrs. Bunting, Watson, Newton, Reece, and many more whom I honor too much to speak before without help, I spoke freely, and was heard with much apparent interest, (cries of hear! hear! being frequently uttered,) and, I have reason to believe, to the satisfaction of the meeting. I owe very much to the goodness of these excellent men. Surely, if I ever felt the least measure of Christian humility, I feel it now."

The British Conference was opened on the 30th July, in the City Road Chapel. Mr. Bunting was elected President, and Mr. Newton Secretary.

After the usual formalities, the Irish Representatives were announced and their address read. The President then expressed in handsome terms the great pleasure he felt in having it in his power to introduce a Representative from the United States; and spoke in terms of high gratification of what he had seen of Mr. Capers while present at their committees. Mr. Reece rose and said he had known Mr. Capers in America, and loved him then, and had loved him ever since: no one could do otherwise; and he knew they would find it so. The President then, turning to Mr. Capers and calling him by name, took him by the hand, and said, "Most cordially, sir, do I, on behalf of the Conference, extend to you, as the Representative of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America, the right hand of fellowship." Mr. Capers, with a faltering voice, made suitable acknowledgments. The scene was one of interest, and produced a strong sensation in the Conference.

The impression made upon Mr. Capers by the prominent men of the Wesleyan Connection, will be best gathered from his own words:

"On Sabbath morning I heard a wise and good sermon, at City Road Chapel, from the ex-President; in the afternoon one from Mr. W M. Bunting, at Great Queen Street Chapel; and in the evening one from President Bunting himself. The President is the finest preacher I ever heard. I was sitting on the platform just by Mr. Gaulter; and as soon as the service was closed, Mr. Gaulter

said to me, 'We have no man in the Connection like Mr. Bunting; he is far the best pattern for a young man that we have. From first to last he aims simply at winning souls; and he *does* win them.' This testimony, so honorable to Mr. Bunting, coming as it does from one of the present fathers of the Connection, is well deserved. He uses very little gesture, and seldom employs metaphor; but with a countenance expressive of great earnestness, and fluency of speech beyond any one I ever heard, he sweeps along with a full and overflowing tide of solid argument, in neat and simple language. In all his sermon (which was an hour and a half long) I could not detect the slightest inaccuracy. The difference between my friend Newton and Mr. Bunting, is almost as great as that between a popular orator and a first-rate preacher; and yet Mr. Newton is not only an orator, but an able man, and an excellent preacher also.

"To-day I am to dine with Dr. Clarke. The Doctor is one of the coarsest-looking men I ever saw, to be any thing like civilized or learned. He is strong-built, and fleshy; would probably weigh not much less than two hundred pounds; is about five feet nine inches high. His hair is as white as cotton, and he wears it turned back over his head. It is very thin. He has full eyebrows, as white as the hair of his head. His mouth is very broad; lips thick and prominent. Has the Irish pronunciation as perfectly as if he was just from their potatc fields—such as *sowl* for soul, and *sacretary* for secre-

tary. His utterance is rapid, and his language always clear, strong, and simple. His face is very red, as if the blood might gush out of it. It is quite striking to an American how indifferent people here seem to be to the correct pronunciation of their language. Mr. Bunting excepted, I cannot admire the pronunciation of any of the preachers I have met with. And to hear such a man as Mr. Watson say continually, *noledge*, *acnoldge*, for knowledge, etc., and *stud*, *understud*, etc., for stood, understood, and the like, is surprising indeed. They seem, generally, to cleave to their country provincialisms. Certainly they could avoid them if they would try.

"Some of the larger chapels are finished very magnificently in comparison with the best we have in America; and organs are frequently used in them. Even the City Road Chapel looks not very like what one might expect in a house built by John Wesley. There is no organ, however, in this chapel. It seems that Mr. Wesley had no objection to organs; and certainly most of the present fathers, if they do not greatly admire the use of them in public worship, have no *objection* to their use, except on the score of expense. Hundreds of pounds are annually raised for the purchase of organs. Pity that these sums were not applied to another use. Dr. Clarke is a great enemy to organs. I happened to be sitting by him when a question involving an organ was before the Conference. 'Have you organs among you in America?' said

he to me, privately. 'No, sir,' I replied. 'Then,' he rejoined, 'keep the organs and the devil out.' There had been a serious dispute in one of the societies about an organ."

The Conference commenced on the 30th July, at six o'clock A. M. About four hundred and fifty preachers were present; and the session lasted till the 18th of August, when it was concluded, at nine o'clock P M., as it had been commenced, with solemn, fervent prayer, by several of the older preachers. The visit and addresses of Mr. Capers were acknowledged in the following resolutions, unanimously adopted:

"*Resolved*, 1. That it is with the most cordial satisfaction, and with sincere gratitude to God, that this Conference has heard the interesting communications now made by the Rev. William Capers, respecting the extraordinary work of God carried on by the instrumentality of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America.

" 2. That the Conference receives with unfeigned pleasure the assurances conveyed by Mr. Capers of the decided and increasing attachment of the ministers and members of the Church he represents, to the doctrines and general discipline of Methodism, as preserved in the writings of our venerable Founder; and of their unabated affection to the preachers of the British Conference. And this Conference does most cordially assure the American brethren, that the sentiments of Christian love and esteem expressed by them are perfectly

reciprocal on the part of every member of this body.

"3. That the cordial thanks of this Conference are due to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America, for the appointment of their excellent Representative, Mr. Capers, whose amiable manners, devout spirit, and acceptable ministry, have greatly endeared him to the preachers now assembled, and confirmed their feelings of respect and attachment towards their American brethren at large.

"4. That the warmest thanks of the Conference are hereby presented to Mr. Capers, for the great ability, Christian spirit, and brotherly kindness, with which he has discharged the duties of his honorable mission; and the Conference respectfully assure him, that their most fervent prayers for his welfare will attend him on his return to his native country, and that he will long retain a high place in their affectionate remembrance."

On the 22d August, two days before Mr. Capers took his final leave of London, he fulfilled an engagement previously made with the venerable Dr. Adam Clarke, to spend a short time with him at his seat, Haydon Hall, fifteen miles from the metropolis. He gives the following interesting account of this visit:

"My friend, the universally esteemed Joseph Taylor, accompanied me, and we spent a most pleasant afternoon and night under the roof of the Doctor. No one can be more perfectly unbent than

Dr. Clarke in the company of his friends. Whether in his library, with his ancient manuscripts, which he employed several hours in showing us—Arabic, Syriac, Saxon, etc., almost without number; or with the many curiosities he has collected in his museum; or in his garden; or the chapel which he has fitted up out of his barn; or showing us and feeding his pony, or the dunghill cock and hen which he brought with him on his return from a recent visit to the Shetland Islands: his whole manner is as easy, playful, and familiar as can be conceived; such as in turn would equally interest a scholar or a child. While at table, the cocked-hat he used to wear was mentioned. He said he used to wear a slouched hat, but Mr. Wesley did not like it; and after saying vaguely something on the subject, he once said in Adam's presence, 'If a Methodist preacher shall come into my company with a slouched hat on, I will take it as an insult.' 'This alarmed me,' said the Doctor, 'so I straightway got me a cocked-hat.' Then leaving us without saying why, he went for his hat, and presently coming in with it on his head, he saluted us with great humor, bowing profoundly, as if not only to show the hat, but also the younger manners of the wearer of it. A similar piece of humor was exhibited the next morning in his study. His being descended from an honorable Scotch family by the maternal line, had been mentioned; and while I was amusing myself with a rare book, he stepped out, and presently returned, wearing the bonnet of

nis house, (the house of McLean,) a blue woollen cap, with ostrich feathers at the left side, fastened with a small device of silver. After this he introduced himself with '*the bonnet of his clan ;*' a cap of thick woollen, fitting close to the head, the lower part plaided of red and white, the upper part blue, with eagle feathers fastened with a device of silver. different from the other. All this was done in perfect play.

"The Doctor's circumstances are very easy. The country-seat where he lives is his own. The house is of brick, rather ancient, but large and commodious, well built and well furnished; with an extensive lawn in front and in the rear, with elegant walks, gardens, shrubbery, etc., after the English fashion. The room which you first enter is curiously ornamented with numerous ancient insignia, and various curiosities of Eastern and African nations, etc., etc. There are two rooms appropriated to his library and museum, besides his study, which also is of considerable size, and is lined with shelves closely filled with books and manuscripts, from the top to the bottom. My friend, Mr. Taylor, conjectured that his library and museum together might probably be worth thirty thousand pounds.

"His Royal Highness, the Duke of Sussex, is particularly fond of Dr. Clarke, and passes one day annually with him, at Haydon Hall. The Doctor told me it was about the time for him to expect this yearly honor, but that his visit to Shetland,

and the business of the Conference, had prevented his making his respects to the Duke, to know when it might suit his convenience to bestow it. The Doctor is often at the Duke's, who is fond of being entertained with biblical criticism."

Four years after the visit just described, Dr. Clarke died.

Mr. Capers visited, of course, the principal points of interest in London—the Thames Tunnel, the Royal Exchange, Blackfriars' Bridge, the palaces, parks, and the like. Of St. Paul's he says: "Nothing I had ever imagined could equal my amazement. The awful length and breadth and height! This cathedral beggars every thing I ever had beheld. The echoes give a constant rumbling through its lofty arches that alone might make one feel a sense of dread. The monuments are noble and imposing; but there is not one to celebrate a victory, either by land or sea, over the arms of the United States."

"From Westminster Hall, we went to Westminster Abbey; and this, of all things and places in England, is, I suppose, the best worth seeing. The entrance is at the Poet's Corner. And thence through numerous compartments filled with monuments of statesmen, knights, nobles, warriors, and kings, you are conducted by one who has an interest in it, and who explains every remarkable monument throughout the whole labyrinthine pile. It is solemn even to awfulness to go through this place. The majesty of the building is surpassed

only by St. Paul's. We could not get through before the afternoon service was commenced. The place of worship, however, being distinct from the rest of the Abbey, we were not interrupted; and after we had gone mostly through the Abbey, we entered the chapel and took some part, if indeed it can be called part, in the service. There were but few persons present; and I could not but think that in that awful place there appeared less of devotion than I ever saw in a poor log-cabin meeting-house in America: so little can the parade and pomp of circumstance do for religion! Having heard, indistinctly, part of the afternoon service read, and listened to the pretty little Westminster boys chanting the Psalms, we concluded our inspection of the monuments, where we had begun it, namely, at the Poet's Corner."

On the 26th August, Mr. Capers left the elegant, hospitable Highbury Lodge, and the far-famed mammoth city of London, never expecting to see either of them again. He was engaged to take breakfast at Mr. Taylor's at half-past eight o'clock, and the stage-coach for Oxford at nine. The parting scene was touching. "At seven o clock all the family were in the library (one hour before their usual hour of rising) to spend the last moments with me, and bid adieu. Mr. Haslope asked me to pray with them; after which I took leave, not as a stranger would take leave of strangers, but as a friend bidding adieu to beloved and honored friends. Mr. H. had ordered the coach, and accom-

panied me to Mr. Taylor's, where we breakfasted together, and then went to the stage-office. I could not finally leave London, and especially I could not take a final adieu of Mr. Haslope and Mr. Taylor, without feeling much. I have been a month in Mr. Haslope's family, a stranger, a foreigner, during which time I have had every mark of respect that could have been shown a most honored guest extended to me. More than this: respect, even in this short time, has ripened into affection; and I have been unceasingly, of late, gratified with the tenderest proofs of it. Nothing has been wanting from every member of the family to show their affection for me. I never knew a more amiable or happy family; I never knew one to whom, in so short a time, I felt so much attached."

This testimony is alike honorable to host and guest. Mr. Capers possessed rare social qualities—genial warmth, quick sympathy with every generous and noble trait of character, rich conversational power, and the ease and finish of elegant manners. He was fitted not only to shine in the higher circles of London society, but to attract genuine esteem and affection. That the Haslopes should have taken him to their hearts is not wonderful. In them he saw a model specimen of the cultivated, refined, Christian, English family. The abolition mania had not then spread its fanatical virus over British society; nor was it considered that an American Christian gentleman had no right

to the courtesies of society if he had the misfortune to come from South Carolina.

Allowance should undoubtedly be made for the present anti-Southern feelings of our British cousins. It was not until the session of the Wesleyan Conference in 1830 that the subject of the abolition of slavery in the West India colonies was formally taken up by the Conference. Only about twenty years previously, Great Britain had put an end to the slave-trade, after having kept it up in full play for *two hundred and fifty years*, and filled not only the West India islands but the American colonies with enslaved Africans. And it was not until 1834 that the British Parliament abolished slavery in the West Indies. The policy, enterprise, and ships of England planted the institution in the Southern States. England is the mother, the dry-nurse of the system; and to this day the slave-raised cotton of these same States keeps up a large portion of her manufacturing industry. Considering all this, it is not matter of much surprise that her late-born abolition zeal should approach the limits of the farcical. How appropriate, for instance, is it that this zeal should show its abhorrence of a two-hundred and fifty years' policy and profits by declining all fraternal ecclesiastical intercourse between its now immaculate self and the Southern American churches around which that very policy planted the germs of existing servile institutions! The charm of consistency in the whole thing is refreshing.

It was the good fortune of Mr. Capers to visit Great Britain before the times were changed. He was received with the utmost cordiality, and with unbounded kindness. The General Conference was thanked for the appointment of so "excellent a representative." His Christian, devout spirit, no less than his "great ability," was noticed in formal resolutions. In fine, the Wesleyans had not reached that point of progress at which "connection with slavery" was the unpardonable sin. He left the shores of Albion in the odor of sanctity!

After leaving London he visited Oxford, and saw Mr. Wesley's room in Lincoln College: Kingswood, and made an address to the sons of the preachers there; Madeley, and preached in the barn where John Fletcher's voice had so often been heard. The curate, Mr. Cooper, took him through the vicarage-house, garden, church, etc.; and before they parted asked Mr. Capers to pray with him in the room where both Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher died. He spent a Sabbath at Manchester, went to Leeds, Edinburgh, Glasgow, thence to Belfast and Dublin, and back to Liverpool; from which port he sailed for Charleston, early in October. The voyage home lasted forty-five days: a length of time almost fabulous in these days of ocean steamers. One storm after another pelted the poor "Lady Rowena." Spars were splintered, sails torn, the ship's cow was battered to death; they saw the "compesants," fire-balls at the masthead;

and witnessed the rush of a waterspout which passed with furious bellowing within two hundred yards of the ship. Mr. Capers held Divine service every Sabbath, for the most of the time "all sitting and holding on." With a joy language cannot depict, and with the devoutest gratitude to God for so many mercies, he returned to his own dear family circle, after an absence of nearly six months.

CHAPTER IV.

Invitation to go to Baltimore—Missions to the blacks established—Results of these missions.

On his return from England, Mr. Capers immediately resumed the duties of his Presiding Elder's office. The membership on the Charleston District, as reported at the close of the year 1828, amounted to three thousand four hundred and ninety-two whites, and five thousand nine hundred and seventy-seven colored. Soon after the session of the Annual Conference, Dr. T. E. Bond, of Baltimore, opened a correspondence with Mr. Capers, to ascertain whether he could be prevailed upon to take a transfer to the Baltimore Conference. Mr. Capers, in reply, adverted to several grave difficulties in the way of such a project. Dr. Bond, in a letter bearing date February 27th, 1829, undertook to obviate these difficulties. One of them was that Dr. Capers was a slaveholder. It had been understood that the good old Baltimore Conference had defined its position on this vexed question; and that, while it tolerated slaveholders among the membership of the Methodist Episcopal Church, it had set its face against having a slaveholder among

the travelling preachers. This Mr. Capers considered, of course, a bar to any further negotiations on the subject. As one of the curiosities of ecclesiastical diplomacy, it may interest some of our readers who recollect Dr. Bond's after-course as editor of the Christian Advocate and Journal, and, in particular, his attacks on Dr. Capers personally, as a slaveholder, to see an extract from this letter of February 27th. The following paragraph is a faithful copy from the original: "The friends who united with me in reference to the suggestion made in my last, have very carefully considered the objection you so frankly make to our proposal. But, after mature deliberation, they do not entirely accord with you in the opinion that your transfer to this Conference is unsuitable. In the first place, your apprehension that your being the owner of slaves, under the peculiar circumstances of the case, would operate to your disadvantage, is, we think, a mistake. If you cannot free them where you live, and circumstances render it improper to remove them, as we understand is the case, we speak advisedly when we say, that your being so unfortunate as to be encumbered with slaves will not be in the way of your usefulness in Baltimore."

Must not strange ideas of ecclesiastical *unity* obtain in a connectional Church which permits a domestic institution, such as slavery, to exist in one portion of its geographical territory, under the full sanction both of disciplinary statute and public opinion, and, in another portion, condemns the

same institution as not only sinful but infamous?—which allows in laymen, family and civil relations which in the case of ministers become at once violations of moral law?—which, consequently, holds to a variable rule of Christian morals, adjusted by a sliding scale—one thing to one man, and altogether another to another man?—which asks, "What shall be done for the extirpation of the great evil of slavery?" and answers the question by distinctly permitting it to exist within one half of the ecclesiastical enclosures?—which deplores a "connection with slavery" as a terrible calamity, and all the while keeps in its communion, as brethren beloved, ministers and laymen who hold slaves? If it be said that this is an evil, in the eye of ecclesiastical law, only as poverty or bad civil government is an evil, what has the Church to do with it? If an evil in a moral and religious point of view, in other words *a sin*, how then can the Church, the guardian of public morals, tolerate it? These questions never have been answered. The whole case is perfectly anomalous. And far back of the General Conference of 1844 must be traced the germ of connectional separation, which came to maturity in the action of a majority of that body, in the cases of a Baltimore preacher and a Georgia Bishop.

Mr. Capers declined, of course, all overtures to remove from the South Carolina Conference, although in the negotiations very liberal offers of a pecuniary sort were made him. He had, indeed,

been compelled to use, of his own small patrimony, at least three thousand dollars beyond the means allowed him for the support of his family, in the service of the Church. Pecuniary embarrassments began to give him some distress of mind; but as soon as this was known to his friends on the district, a handsome amount, fully covering what was understood to be his liabilities, was immediately made up, principally in the Black Swamp and Orangeburg Circuits, and presented to him in the kindest and most delicate manner.

The year 1829 is memorable as the period of the inauguration of a great movement in the Southern portion of the Methodist Church. Two missions to the plantation-slaves were established, one to the blacks south of Ashley river, to which the Rev. John Honour was appointed missionary; and the other to the blacks on Santee river, who were served by the Rev. J. H. Massey as missionary. Mr. Capers, in addition to his regular duties as Presiding Elder, had the honor to be appointed Superintendent of these missions. In the autumn of the preceding year, after his return from England, Mr. Capers was waited on by the Hon. Charles C. Pinckney, a gentleman who had a large planting interest on Santee, to ascertain whether a Methodist exhorter could be recommended to him as a suitable person to oversee his plantation. Mr. Pinckney stated, as the reasons for this application, Mr. Capers's known interest in the religious welfare of the colored population, and the fact that

the happy results which had followed the pious endeavors of a Methodist overseer on the plantation of one of his Georgia friends, had directed his attention to the subject. Mr. Capers told Mr. Pinckney that he doubted whether he could serve him in that particular way, but that, if he would allow him to make application to the Bishop and Missionary Board at the approaching session of the Conference, he would venture to promise that a minister, for whose character he could vouch fully, should be sent to his plantation as a *missionary*, whose time and efforts should be devoted exclusively to the religious instruction and spiritual welfare of his colored people. To this proposal Mr. Pinckney gave his cordial assent. Soon after, Col. Lewis Morris and Mr. Charles Baring, of Pon Pon, united in a similar request. These were gentlemen of high character, who thus took the initiative in a course of missionary operations which may justly be termed the glory of Southern Christianity. They were members of the Protestant Episcopal Church, but availed themselves of the earliest opening which the peculiar itinerant organization of the Methodist Church afforded, for furnishing religious instruction to their slaves at the hands of men deemed competent and safe in the judgment of Mr. Capers.

The position of the plantation negroes on the river-deltas of the low country is peculiar. In this malarial region very few white families are found. Churches are, of course, very scarce; and apart

from special arrangements made for the religious improvement of the blacks by the planters, there is no access, in many instances, to any of the agencies of the organized Christianity of the country. Originally brought from Western Africa, the most ignorant and degraded portion of the realm of Paganism; enslaved, many of them, in their fatherland; victims of debasing superstitions; what recuperative element was there to be found in their condition? That inscrutable providence of God, whose march through the centuries is apparently slow but with unerring tread and in the right direction, seems to have overruled the cupidity of the British slave-traders, and allowed an exodus of hundreds of thousands of Africa's children to the shores of this country, where, under the mild form of servitude known in the Southern States, they contribute to the feeding and clothing of the world, and are at the same time environed with the light and saving influences of Christian civilization. Unfit for political freedom, unable to govern themselves; put by color and caste, as well as by intellectual inferiority, beyond the possibility of any future absorption into the dominant white race, their condition requires but one additional element to render it, in their present circumstances, in the South, the best that appears attainable by them—and that is religious instruction, adapted to their mental capabilities. Much has been said or "shrieked," by traders in philanthropy, concerning the "chattel" into which the negro has

been transformed by Southern legislation. The fact, however, remains unaltered, that Southern law considers the slave a *person*, treats him as possessed of *ethical* character, and protects him as fully, in his place, as it does his master in *his*. And public opinion freely concedes that moral capabilities and an immortal destiny righteously demand moral cultivation, religious opportunities —in a word, the gospel, which is the chartered right of the poor, and the precious boon of the "bond" as well as the free. The master is under obligation to have his servant taught the duties he owes to God and man. This is one of the responsibilities involved in the relation between the parties; and from this responsibility there is no escape while the relation exists, and while the sanction of the New Testament is claimed for it.

We have related the circumstances under which the experiment of a system of religious operations among the plantation negroes of South Carolina began. Mr. Capers made regular visitations to the two infant missions during the year. On the 11th September, Mr. Honour, who had charge of the one to the south of Charleston, took sick from bilious fever contracted by exposure in the swamps where his mission lay. On the 19th of the same month, after "witnessing a good confession before many witnesses," he triumphantly concluded his mortal life, and entered into life everlasting. Thus the very outset of the enterprise cost the life of a missionary. But this sacrifice furnished proof that

the heroic spirit of the ancient faith was not yet extinct in the Church; and that Methodist preachers knew how to die at their posts, though these might lie among the rice-fields and negro-quarters.

Mr. Capers continued to feel to the time of his death an unabated interest in this missionary work among the blacks of the low-country plantations. He was called upon in 1836, in view of the growing excitement at the North on the vexed question, to present, in the Report of the South Carolina Conference Missionary Society, the position held by the Conference on the subject of abolition. This he did in the following terms: "We regard the question of the abolition of slavery as a *civil* one, belonging to the State, and not at all a *religious* one, or appropriate to the Church. Though we do hold that abuses which may sometimes happen, such as excessive labor, extreme punishment, withholding necessary food and clothing, neglect in sickness or old age, and the like, are immoralities, to be prevented or punished by all proper means, both of Church discipline and the civil law, each in its sphere.

"2. We denounce the principles and opinions of the abolitionists *in toto*, and do solemnly declare our conviction and belief, that whether they were originated, as some business men have thought, as a *money speculation*, or, as some politicians think, for *party electioneering purposes*, or, as we are inclined to believe, in a *false philosophy*, overreaching and

setting aside the Scriptures, through a vain conceit of a higher refinement, they are utterly erroneous, and altogether hurtful.

"3. We believe that the Holy Scriptures, so far from giving any countenance to this delusion, do unequivocally authorize the relation of master and slave: 1. By holding masters and their slaves alike, as believers, brethren beloved. 2. By enjoining on each the duties proper to the other. 3. By grounding their obligations for the fulfilment of these duties, as of all others, on their relation to God. Masters could never have had their duties enforced by the consideration, '*your* MASTER who *is in heaven*,' if barely being a master involved in itself any thing immoral.

"Our missionaries inculcate the duties of servants to their masters, as we find those duties stated in the Scriptures. They inculcate the performance of them as indispensably important. We hold that a Christian slave must be submissive, faithful, and obedient, for reasons of the same authority with those which oblige husbands, wives, fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, to fulfil the duties of these relations. We would employ no one in the work who might hesitate to teach thus; nor can such a one be found in the whole number of the preachers of this Conference."

Nearly a generation has passed away since the commencement of these missionary operations among the blacks. It is interesting to trace their expansion and results through a quarter of a cen-

tury. That there has been a large development is proved by the statistics published from year to year by the Missionary Society. In 1833 two additional mission stations were established. In 1834, they numbered six; in 1835, eight; in 1836, nine; in 1837, ten; and ten years afterwards, viz., in 1847, there were seventeen missions, served by twenty-five efficient preachers of the Conference. At the death of Bishop Capers, there were twenty-six missionary stations in South Carolina, on which were employed thirty-two preachers. The number of Church members at that time was 11,546 on these mission stations. The missionary revenue of the Conference had risen from $300 to $25,000. These are very substantial results, so far as statistics go.

Beyond all this, several important consequences may be observed. That the religious sentiment of the country should be directed, clearly and strongly, in favor of furnishing the colored population with the means of hearing the gospel of their salvation, and of learning their duty to God and their accountability in a future life, is a very cheering aspect of the whole subject. The history of these missions brings out the fact that the Christian minister has been welcomed on the plantations; that chapels have been built; liberal contributions been furnished by the planters; master and servant are seen worshipping God together: the spirit of Christian light and love has reacted upon the one, while it has directly benefited the other. How important

is a growing public sentiment which shows itself in such aspects as these!

We may notice, moreover, the positive influence of Christianity upon the negro population. The gospel is a message intended for *all* men. It takes up, in its grand generalizations, the bond as well as the free. Its offer of salvation is meant to be irrespective of all outward conditions. That it should be preached to all classes of men, is the distinct and clearly revealed will of God, and, therefore, matter of duty and obligation to the Church. Now, if nothing more had been accomplished than the meeting of this solemn responsibility, *that* would have been doing much. Success is with God; duty is for us. And so, too, it were matter of special thankfulness with every right-minded master, that, in the peculiar relation sustained by him to his slaves, it had been in his power to welcome and aid the Christian minister in preaching Jesus and the resurrection to his dependents, even though no visible fruit of holiness appeared as the result. But beyond all this, it is confidently believed that Christian influence has made itself felt in the conscience, conversation, and life of thousands of the blacks. A vast deal of ignorance has been in the way, on the part of the old negroes; many superstitious notions, many fixed habits of immorality, have opposed barriers to the entrance of the word of God to the inner man. The improvement on the part of the younger generation has not been as extensive as their oppor-

tunities of instruction. *Where*, indeed, shall we go to find, as yet, the universal sway of Christianity? And where is that community in which it has been allowed to cure all the evils of man's nature? While, however, it is not claimed that any very extraordinary success in the conversion of the blacks has crowned the exertions of the missionaries, it will hardly be denied that, in many instances, and on all the mission stations, the force of Christian truth, and the power of Christian motives, and the renewing influences of the Holy Ghost, have been felt. It is obvious that much of the instruction given in the ministrations of the missionaries must, of necessity, deal in the first principles of Christian truth; must, to a large extent, be adapted to an humble grade of intellect, and a limited range of knowledge; and must make its impression by constant and patient reiteration. This is precisely what is doing all the time. No romance surrounds such a field of labor; it lacks all the elements which stir the enthusiasm of lofty minds; it is, in the highest degree, a work of faith, demanding the patience of hope and the labor of love. But now and then a gleam of light breaks out: some death-bed scene in the lowly cabin of the negro-quarter attests the power and glory of the gospel. Instead of the stupid indifference of a semi-brutal nature, or the frantic moanings of a terrified superstition, the missionary witnesses the calm confidence of a faith which leans on the bosom of Jesus —the Man of sorrows—the Son of God; and which

trusts his merits for salvation in a crisis that baffles the proudest reason, and prostrates the loftiest self-righteousness.

But, furthermore, it is worthy of notice that, in connection with regular preaching, the catechetical instruction of the young negroes is constantly attended to. This is uniformly done orally. These "little children" are brought to Christ. Is it saying too much to affirm that of many such is the kingdom of heaven? Christian nurture thus grows with their growth. Correct ideas of God, of duty, of the relations of time and eternity, of human accountability—the foundation-principles of Christian character and life—are laid in the earliest years of these catechumens. All true and trustworthy morality, in all classes of society, and particularly in the class now specially referred to, springs from these germs. Beginning with the nascent growth of the intellect, the system has demonstrated the entire practicability of the moral improvement of the African. The lessons imprinted on the mind of childhood may be neglected and their authority spurned in after life, as in the case of others in different circumstances, but they can never be forgotten. They cling to the memory; they haunt the conscience; they whisper in the still small voice; they work valuable restraints; they furnish salutary directions; they inspire hopes connected with the soul's best interests; they form a life-long testimony for God and goodness, and against sin and its fearful retributions in the life to

come. It would be singular, indeed, if this implantation of moral elements and vital forces, in the very formation of character, should lead to no observable good results in the deportment of the plantation-negro. It is true, that to look for moral results in the absence of moral causes—for honesty, fidelity, industry, sobriety, kindliness, and self-restraint where no moral instruction has been imparted—would be as absurd as to expect to reap where there has been no sowing. But such an absurdity is not involved in the present case. The bloom of spring and the fruits of summer are not anticipated where the tree is severed from its root. The moral nurture is given, and we have a right to anticipate appropriate and salutary results.

In point of fact, a gratifying degree of success has crowned these efforts. The testimony of masters and missionaries goes to show that a wholesome effect has been produced upon the character of the negro population generally. A change for the better is visible everywhere, when the present generation is contrasted with the past. And in how many instances the gospel has proved the power of God to salvation, and presented before the throne the spirits of these children of Ham, redeemed and washed "by the blood of sprinkling," and fitted for an abode in heaven, the revelations of the last day will disclose. Results such as these lie, of course, beyond the track of mortal observation. But if these ministerial labors have indeed been instrumental in developing and directing

aright the sentiment of religion; the capability of knowing God so as to fear him; of guiding to Christ, and ultimately to heaven, any number of these docile and lowly but yet immortal beings, for whom redemption was provided in the sacrifice of the Son of God, then they deserve to be reckoned among the noblest triumphs of missionary patience and zeal; none the less important that they lie *at home*, nor the less noteworthy in contrast with the turbulent, malign, and desolating frenzy at the North, which, making the civil and social relations of this class of our population the pretext, has broken up Church associations, carried politics into the pulpit, and is pushing the miners and sappers to the very foundations of the Federal Union. Looking from his death-bed at the peaceful progress of that system of operations for the religious instruction of the slaves of his native State which Dr. Capers had been instrumental in setting on foot, he might well have said:

"Deus nobis hæc otia fecit."

CHAPTER V

Elected Professor in Franklin College—His own humble appreciation of his scholastic abilities—Severe illness—Castile Selby—Stationed in Columbia—Correspondence with Dr. Cooper.

In November, 1829, Mr. Capers was elected Professor of Moral Philosophy and Belles Lettres in Franklin College, Georgia. The appointment was made before any consultation had been held with him. It was the result of the high appreciation in which his character and talents were held in Georgia. He declined the professorship, however. About the same time the degree of Doctor of Divinity was conferred upon him by the Trustees of Augusta College, Kentucky. In reference to this, he made the following statement, a year or two afterward, to Dr. R. Paine: "The title was conferred on me without my knowledge, by a young college, and one of our own; and out of delicacy toward the college, as well as that a great deal was made out of Mr. Beman and Mr. Cox's having declined the same title about the same time, I thought it best to be silent; but I must confess I have never been quite satisfied with myself in that matter."

The reader is aware that bad health had pre-

vented the completion of Dr. Capers's college training. In the ceaseless, miscellaneous duties of a travelling preacher he had found little opportunity for severe, systematic study. He was far more a man of vigorous, original thought than a man of books. He appreciated high scholarship, and his taste was exquisite; but he made no pretensions to a learning which nothing but years of patient, laborious study can bestow. Genius, withal, has some perilous gifts in her dower—vivacity, fluency, quickness of apprehension, and opulence of fancy. These are too often depended on in youth, and made to supply the place of that mental drill which alone carries the powers to their complete and ultimate development, and makes the intellectual character *teres et rotundus*. The subject of this memoir was a man of action, a man of keen and quick observation, of profound and original reflection; he was indebted to *books* for but little of his distinction. Had he been a hard student, it can scarcely be questioned that his mental grasp would have been wider, and his influence greater.

In the autumn of 1830, Dr. Capers had a severe attack of illness, taken while attending a camp-meeting in the Cypress Circuit. After a sick night he set out at the break of day on Monday morning, hoping to reach his home in Charleston that night, a distance of fifty miles. He drove the whole distance without stopping for refreshment. On his arrival he was nearly exhausted; and when Mrs. Capers made some exclamation of surprise at his

looking so ill, he said, "I am feeling badly, but my poor horse must be attended to." While he was in the yard superintending the rubbing of his horse, and giving directions for the proper care of him, Mrs. Capers sent for the family physician, Dr. Dickson, without his knowledge. When the Doctor came, he expressed the pleasure he always felt at meeting him, but regretted that his wife should be so easily frightened. "I am very glad she has sent for me," Dr. Dickson replied; "for there is no time to lose in your case." He was immediately put under active treatment; but so violent was the fever that for several weeks his life seemed to hang in the balance, when a feather's weight on the fatal side would have terminated his course of usefulness on earth. Every possible attention was showed him, and a deep and general solicitude was felt for him in the community. As the crisis of the disease approached, he expressed a calm but firm reliance on Christ; he spoke in touching terms of his unworthiness; gave, as was supposed, his dying-charge to his sorrowing wife, and his last farewell to his weeping children. There was not the rapture and exultation which marked a former illness, when he requested Mrs. Capers to write down, as he dictated, the following couplet:

"O may I joy in all his life,
And shout the Cross in death!"

"Give me the paper," he said; "I wish to draw a line under the words,

"And shout the Cross in death,"

repeating the expression several times. But on the occasion now describing, more of solemn awe and calm confidence in the Redeemer, than of rapturous exultation, marked his spirit. Mrs. Capers was kneeling at his bedside, with one of his hands clasped in both of hers. The present writer, then stationed in Charleston, stood at his head bathing his forehead with ice-water, when a venerable African, Castile Selby, one of the holiest and best men of the colored charge in the city, a class-leader of long standing, and highly respected by Dr. Capers, came into the chamber of death. "I am glad to see you, Father Castile," said Dr. Capers: "you find me near my end, but kneel down and turn your face to the wall, and pray for me; and all of you pray." Castile's prayer was memorable; full of humble submission to the Divine will, but full of pleading, mighty faith in the great Mediator. He asked of God, the giver of life, that the life of his beloved pastor might be spared to the Church. This prayer was memorable, too, in its immediate results. The first words from the sick minister after its close were: "I feel better." Shortly after, Dr. Dickson made his morning visit, and pronounced the crisis past. A rapid convalescence ensued, and he was soon in the pulpit again.

The account given of Henry Evans, of Fayetteville, by Dr. Capers in his Recollections, has been read, no doubt, with interest. We are able to pre-

sent, through the kindness of the Rev. U. Sinclair Bird, several interesting particulars of Castile Selby, written for him by Dr. Capers. He became acquainted with Castile in 1811. He says of him:

"I can call to mind no other person of our colored society of that early day, who, of nearly Castile's age, was esteemed as much as he, though there were some very worthy men among them. The weight and force of his character was made up of humility, sincerity, simplicity, integrity, and consistency; for all which he was remarkable, not only among his fellows of the colored society in Charleston, but, I might say, among all whom I have ever known. He was one of those honest men who need no proof of it. No one who saw him could suspect him. Disguise or equivocation lurked nowhere about him. Just what he seemed to be, that he invariably was—neither less nor more. Add to this a thorough piety, (which indeed was the root and stock of all his virtues,) and you will find elements enough for the character of no common man; and such was Castile Selby. Let me mention some particular characteristics which distinguished him. I notice his love of order—order, not in the sense of regularity only, but of a prime law of society, giving to it symmetry, consistency, and permanence. It was evidently a ruling principle with daddy Castile. Not only was the house he lived in, and the few inferior articles of furniture which it contained, kept in order, that is, clean and to rights, but there was order in that old tarpaulin

hat, and well-patched linsey-woolsey coat, which marked the old cartman as he trudged the streets from day to day, with his old bay-horse and well-worn cart, hauling wood. And then there was order in that clean, unpatched, but still linsey-woolsey coat, and that blue striped handkerchief tied about his head, in which he was to be seen at the house of God, morning, afternoon, and evening, on the Sabbath day. And I will add that a love of order had a full share in his seeming indifference to cold and wet, plying his cart as diligently in inclement weather as if it had been fair and pleasant. If I ever knew a man who was so completely satisfied with his condition as to prefer no change whatever, that man was Castile Selby. His dwelling might have been better, his apparel better, and he might have relieved himself of much fatigue and exposure, but he deemed it unbecoming. On these and kindred subjects I knew his feelings well, having had much conversation with him, and telling him plainly that I thought him wrong. But I could not convince him, while he satisfied me that he was governed by a sense of duty, the fitness and force of which he was better prepared to judge of than perhaps I was. For example: Noticing the meanness of his clothing, and expressing a fear that it might not be comfortable, 'No, master,' he has said, 'these old clothes make me quite comfortable. They just suit my business, and so they just suit me.' Remarking on his Sunday clothes, that he might improve them a little, 'Ah, sir,' he has

answered, 'don't you see how our colored people are turning fools after dress and fashion, just as if they were white? They want somebody to hold them back. I dress for my color. And besides that, master, how can I take what the Lord is pleased to give me to do some little good with, and put it on my back?'

"But it was his indefatigable industry, not allowing of a reasonable suspension of his labors in bad weather, which most frequently induced our friendly disputes. For a number of years occasion was frequently offered for these; and though I never could convince him, and he persevered in his habits to the last of life, I seldom let an opportunity slip without some words of remonstrance. I wish I could give you an exact representation of some of these disputes. *Exact* I could not make it, and yet I think I can call up what may interest you. Let me try:

"'Well, well, Father Castile! Out again in the rain with that old coat! Why in the world will you expose yourself so? And are not your legs swelled, even now?'

"'Ah, master, I thought you would scold if you happened to meet me. But no matter, master; the rain won't hurt me, I am used to it.'

"'But it *will* hurt you; it *must* hurt you. And I dare say those swelled legs came by just such exposure as this. You ought to be at home; and do pray, now, go home and keep yourself comfortable.'

"'For your sake, sir, I would go home, but several families are looking for me to haul them wood to-day, and I must not disappoint them.'

"'And who will haul them wood after you have killed yourself?'

"'I won't kill myself, sir; I have been used to this all my life, and use, as you know, is second nature. I never find myself any better for lying up. But, master, a'n't you out too?'

"'Yes, I am; but it is only for a little time, and I am fully protected; but here you are regularly at it for a day's work, with no protection from the weather but your hat, and that threadbare blanket overcoat. You really ought to go home. Think you that the second nature you talk about can make an old infirm man like you young again? You can't stand it, Father Castile, and you ought not to try to stand it. Do pray go home.'

"'Ah, master! They say, "Better wear out than rust out." There are too many lazy people rusting out, for me to lie up because it rains a little. By-and-by they'll say, "Castile is lazy too;" or "Castile is turned gentleman, and can't wet his foot;" and what can I say? If they are negroes, so am I. If they ought to work, I ought to work too. I can't help working, master, and I don't want to help it. It is the lot it has pleased God to give me, and it suits me best.'

"As the infirmities of age increased on my old friend, while his habits of continual industry seemed indomitable, I became anxious about him; and

after conversing with several of our brethren, and finding them of my own mind with respect to him, I determined to adopt a course which I supposed must prove effectual. I told him that while his long course of holy living had made him friends of the principal members of the church, who shared with me the kindest feelings for him, and were more than willing to provide for all his wants, it placed him in a position with respect to the colored society which we thought required, both for himself and them, that his time should be differently employed from what it had been. We were fully persuaded that it was our duty to rescue him from his cart, and put it in his power to employ all his time in a way which we believed would prove more to the glory of God; and that was, (while he should be able to go about,) to visit the sick, aged, and infirm, and look after the flock generally, praying with them, and doing them all the spiritual good in his power. For his comfortable support during the remainder of his life, such and such reliable gentlemen would pledge themselves, I would pledge myself, and the stewards of the church would see that he lacked nothing. 'Now, my old friend,' said I, 'we want you to sell your horse and cart immediately, and use the money as you think proper; you shall want for nothing; and let it be your only business to help all the souls you can to heaven.' He received this proposition with profound sensibility and many thanks; but could be induced only to add that he would think of it. It

was just before my journey to attend General Conference; and on my return to Charleston, I had scarcely reached my door before I saw Castile Selby, just as aforetime, seated on his throne, the old cart. 'Ah, master,' said he, 'the very thing you would do for me to make me useful, would hinder more than it would help me. It would make some envious; some would call me parson, and say the white people had spoiled me; and nobody would take me to be the same Castile I have always been. There is nothing better for me than this same old cart.' "

At the beginning of the year 1830, the South Carolina Conference was divided, the Georgia Conference set off, and the Savannah river made the dividing line. At the close of the year Dr. Capers completed his quadrennial term on the Charleston District. During the four years there had been an accession to the membership of the Church within the bounds of the district, of one thousand one hundred and forty-nine whites, and two thousand two hundred and forty-nine colored.

His next station was Columbia. It was soon found that the crowds attracted by his eloquent preaching made it necessary to have a larger church. Arrangements were accordingly made for the erection of a brick edifice, of which, in the course of the summer, he laid the corner-stone.

Dr. Thomas Cooper was at this time the President of the State College at Columbia; a man of large scientific acquirements and vigorous intellect, but

understood to be skeptical in his opinions on religion. The fortunes of the college were waning under his administration, as Christian sentiment in the country arrayed itself against an institution which, it was feared, was becoming the *arida nutrix* of infidel principles. This probably gave additional exasperation to the learned President, and sharpened the edge of his invective against the clergy. Early in May, Dr. Cooper sent a copy of his last Commencement address, printed and published at the request of the senior class, to Dr. Capers, accompanied with a polite letter in which he said: "I feel desirous that my invectives against a money-seeking, hireling ministry, may not be understood as applying to the ministers of the Methodist persuasion, whose very moderate receipts, as a pecuniary compliment from their congregations, have never been considered by me in the light of a compensation; and because the ambitious projects of some of the clergy to establish a union between Church and State (of which, I regret to say, I have undeniable proofs) are by no means participated in, or in any degree approved, by the leaders of your persuasion. When I find myself mistaken in this opinion, my present respect for the Methodists will be greatly lessened. At present, I hope and believe, they are fully deserving not merely of my personal approbation, for their praiseworthy and quiet demeanor, and absence from all political intermeddling, but they have earned also, and enjoy, the respect and approbation

of the public. With John and Charles Wesley, and the two sons of the latter, I was well acquainted in my early day, and a visitor in the family of the latter. During my occasional intercourse with that great and good man, John Wesley, I was fully persuaded, from much personal observation, that he received from his hearers food and clothing and a horse, and no more. I knew his habits, and I know, too, that he died in circumstances fully confirming his oft-repeated declaration, that if he left behind him at his death more than ten pounds, when his funeral expenses were paid, the world might consider him a thief and a robber. A sect organized by such a man, so thinking and so acting, is not likely to be over-anxious either for wealth or power."

The letter concluded with sincere assurances of good-will and great respect.

Dr. Capers made suitable acknowledgments in reply; but took occasion, with becoming respect, to suggest that it appeared to him that the public would be apt to consider the invectives of the address as levelled against the clergy of *all* sects; and that against a *public* implication it might be improper for him to acknowledge a *private* exemption, further than as a compliment to an individual.

To this Dr. Cooper replied: "I do not see how I can publicly express my opinion that a hireling ministry is a term not applicable to the teachers and preachers of your persuasion; but you are at full liberty to use my letter as you see fit."

In a subsequent letter, Dr. Cooper expressed himself frankly in respect to his own religious opinions. He thought that the leaning of the doctrines of Jesus Christ, and the Apostle John, was in favor of those opinions: whether they could be reconciled to the notions of St. Paul, "the great corrupter of Christianity," as he thought, he could not affirm. His opinions, at least, had cost him much hard study and anxious inquiry.

The following admirable passage closed a long letter, in return, from Dr. Capers: "With respect to your opinion of Christian doctrine, I have nothing to remark in the way of controversy. I am fully persuaded that neither metaphysics nor logic ever made or can make a true Christian. The way to Christ, who is the Saviour of all men, must be level and accessible to all. 'Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.' And again: 'If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.' I forbear a quotation from St. Paul; but allow me to express my regret that you should consider him 'the great corrupter of Christianity.' Alas, sir, 'if the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?' Suffer me thus far, and let me add, out of an honest heart, the following sentiments. Of all men, merely man, who have ever lived, I most admire that one, who (the plenary inspiration of the

apostle aside) gave the highest evidence of a disinterested and unlimited devotion to the will of God and the good of mankind; who followed the light of Heaven without faltering, though it led him to a distance from every worldly interest, to take for his daily fare hunger and thirst, bonds and imprisonment, stripes, stoning, and death; and who, more than any other, was honored of God as an instrument of spreading abroad the unsearchable riches of Christ."

CHAPTER VI.

Miss Jane A. Faust—Miss Maxwell—An awakening sermon—Rhymes—Dr. Capers removes to Charleston—General Conference of 1832—Is offered the Presidency of LaGrange College.

In the circle of young, admiring, loving friends whom Dr. Capers drew around him in Columbia, was one whose preëminent worth, intellectual and moral, won a high place in his esteem—Miss Jane A. Faust. His preaching and conversation were eminently adapted to impress a mind like hers. The sentiment of admiration deepened into a serious concern for her soul; and she was led to Christ, and found peace in believing. She became a communicant in the Methodist Episcopal Church in the course of the next year, under the ministry of the Rev. Josiah Freeman, for whom also she felt a very high regard. Dr. Capers, a few years after her death, published in the Southern Christian Advocate a couple of brief elegiac poems, written on the occasion of her early and lamented departure, by her friend Mrs. Martin; prefacing them by describing Miss Faust as one "who possessed and exercised, especially in the latter years of her brief and lovely life, the highest qualifications for making one's friends happy." He ex-

pressed his admiration of "her genius, accomplishments, sweetness of spirit, devotion to her friends, and piety towards God;" and added: "Miss Faust never made a book—she shrank from publicity—but I have known no one whose conversation or letters were superior if equal to hers."

From such a source, this is high praise; but it was well deserved. Miss Faust's mind was by native endowment of the highest order; and it was developed by early, careful, and varied culture. Racy, sparkling, and full of animation, her conversation possessed a charm for every listener. Its excellences were so peculiar that a public speaker, desirous of fashioning his style upon the best models, might have cultivated her society, on the principle which induced Cicero to resort to the company of the noble and refined Roman matrons, to perfect his mastery of the Latin tongue. The fascination of her manners and the grace of her carriage were in keeping with her "winged and winning speech." Her eye shone with the clear light of a serene intellect; and her face was radiant with the beaming of sincerity and pure-mindedness. Her look indicated warmth of heart, and steady resolve, as though she could stand for the truth, like Abdiel,

"Amidst revolted multitudes, alone."

In her religious experience she was ever watchful lest well-formed opinions should be mistaken for gracious feelings, and a correct judgment of things be allowed to pass for an active principle of piety.

Her faith in Christ rested on an intelligent perception of the fact that in the circumstances of moral defection which environ the human race, *merit* is an impossible plea; that the sinner must be saved by grace; and that this grace is "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Away from all conceit of self-righteousness, her spirit hasted to the sanctuary whose altar yet retains the fragrance of the sacrifice "once offered" by the "Victim Divine," and whose foundation was hewn from the "Rock of Ages." The strength of her piety was tested, and its loveliness illustrated, amidst manifold physical sufferings. In the flower of life consumption did its fatal work. In the last letter she ever wrote, when too feeble to converse with the kind friends who waited upon her, and watched the advance of the shadow of death, and with strength scarce sufficient to guide her pen, she said: "There seems to be much physical suffering in store for me; but it matters not, if Christ be mine. Washed and sanctified by his Spirit, (if at last it should be,) the struggles of frail mortality will not affect the homeward bound of my renovated spirit. Sometimes I am so weary of myself and sin, so 'tempest-tossed and afflicted and not comforted,' that I long to be at rest. O for a full, unwavering trust in Christ for salvation from *all sin!* Feeble as my faith is, how precious does the blood of Christ appear—how sweet the hope of pardon he has purchased for us!" A week or two after this, on the evening of January 2, 1834, she

entered into her everlasting rest. With perfect composure of mind, with the exclamation, "Boundless mercy, full and free!" whispered forth again and again—her bodily sufferings all ended—death gently loosed the bonds of the frail tabernacle, and set free the immortal spirit to find a congenial home in the abodes of light and bliss, where reign for ever sceptred Mercy and enthroned Love.

Do we feel to wonder why powers and capabilities such as these should just appear and then vanish? Are we surprised that excellence of the highest order, fitted to enrich and adorn human society, the embodiment of one's pure ideal beauty, should pass away in its freshest morning bloom? that some bright particular star, the cynosure of every admiring eye, should suddenly disappear like the lost Pleiad? The intuition of reason, which cannot deceive us in such a case, is that a preparation so elaborate, a prelude so magnificent, *cannot* thus end, but must have a fitting completion. *What* that completion is, and *where* we are to find it, Revelation has unerringly taught. Heaven is the magnet which has drawn to itself all this early loveliness and excellence. The celestial bowers, where live the loved and lost, supply the congenial atmosphere for the expansion of these high and holy qualities. From the city of God, the long-lost friends of our youth wave a welcome to us;—is it saying too much, to add, that probably they will be the first to greet *our* approach?

When Mary poured the spikenard over the head

of Jesus, the testimonial of an adoring love which counted nothing too costly, the tribute of a veneration which recognized the Lord of glory in the "Man of sorrows," Jesus said: "Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her." Let this page be, in its humble measure, a memento of one of Mary's own sex, as lovely, perchance, in person, with a sensibility as tender, an intelligence as quick, who exercised *faith* in Jesus, while Mary had the evidence of sense; who possessed the consummated truth and blessing of the gospel, while Mary stood only at the brightening dawn; who poured out the fragrance of her heart's most precious affections at the feet of the same Jesus; saw in him the face of infinite beauty; found in the mystery of his transcendent love the theme of loftiest thought and ever-adoring delight; and to the last throb of consciousness trusted her all in his hands—then passed on into the upper sanctuary, to the brightness and rapture of the vision for ever.

Among the young lady friends of Dr. Capers in Columbia, was another who owed much of her religious impressions to his instrumentality—Miss Maxwell, now Mrs. William Martin. Her own account of the first sermon she heard from him is as follows: "His text was the sixty-seventh Psalm, entire. Now, for the first time, I heard preaching with the hearing ear. The sermon was a beautiful paraphrase of the Psalm. Never, till this evening

at church, had my mind so realized the might, majesty, and grandeur of that God, 'glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders.' What a new gospel it appeared to me, so full of beneficence, love, and mercy! I had listened to discourses of learning, eloquence, and fluency before, but never before heard the message that went straight to my heart. I felt it was for me. That message I must hearken to and obey. It was imperative on me to do so. Woe was me, I felt, if I regarded it not. Before, I had been convinced of sin, but the impression had been vague, and had proved evanescent. Now I felt that the matter between me and my God must be settled at once But my mind was still much clouded, my views confused, my thoughts perplexed. The minister of that evening was, providentially, a guest at the house of a mutual friend in my immediate neighborhood. Frequently it was arranged that I had the opportunity of conversing with him touching those things that would make for my peace. How beautifully he smoothed, and simplified, and softened all, till my difficulties were removed, and my way was clear to follow Jesus in the regeneration!"

This lady has kindly furnished the following *jeu d'esprit* from the pen of Dr. Capers. It was in answer to a poetical letter, written on the eve of the Doctor's departure from Columbia, and bears date, Charleston, February 17, 1832:

"MY DEAR MARGARET:—You must not be grieved that the lines you put into my wife's hand so kindly, when I was leaving Columbia, and one other similar provocation, should rouse me a little. Some of you good girls have such a propensity to mischief, that one can hardly get along with you without fetching a slap now and then. I remember to have given Jane (Miss Faust) a sound box once for something she said—actually struck her a blow on the shoulder—and she thanked me for it, 'because,' said she, 'I know you are not vexed with me, or you would not slap me.' As for *your* part, I dare say this same black and white box I am giving you will be returned by a courtesy, and you will have impudence enough to tell me I like to be flattered, or I would not take the trouble to disclaim it. Well, who knows but I *do* like to be, when it is done so decently as by Miss Maxwell? But I forewarn you, you are not to make a *poetaster* of me. A *poet* I cannot be made by both of us together. The Fates, if there be any, do positively forbid it. It is a great effort to put rhymes of my forming into gifted hands—or even into any hands at all—and yet I believe some very clever men have been guilty of some very prosing rhymes.

"Yours affectionately, W CAPERS."

"I always have heard that affection was kind,
And now I've discovered she also is blind;
Puts out her own eyes that her heart may be free
To imagine perfections she never could see.

'Tis strange, I confess, but 'tis certainly true,
(I owe the discovery, Margaret, to you,)
I have proof upon proof of it, rife and at hand,
That might challenge belief all over the land.
There lived where *I* lived a girl of your name,
And so like *yourself* she might pass for the same;
A very good girl, and a girl of much wit,
Except where I'll tell where she showed not a bit.
This same clever girl had a friend whom I knew,
A friend as like *me* as she was like *you;*
A well-meaning man, and a preacher withal,
Who, besides being honest, claimed nothing at all,
Except the rare luck, if luck it might be,
To have friends among folks that were better than he.
Of these—and indeed they were many and true—
Was the girl I have mentioned as so much like you;
And, as was the person, her friendship, I ween,
Was just like the friendship that joins us between;
That same hearty feeling of feeling at heart,
For better or worse, each to take other's part.

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The good man was bald, but a complaisant whim
Could convert even baldness to beauty for him;
For his hair had but fallen in grace to his head,
That a wreath of Parnassus might grow in its stead;
And the Muses were there with their pencils of fire,
And cymbals, and lutes, and the sweet-sounding lyre,
To crown with a glory, and chant to the skies,
Whom, think ye?—Alas for the sight of blind eyes!"

The two following years were spent in Charleston. In April, 1832, he took ship for New York, *en route* to Philadelphia, the seat of the General Conference, to which he had been appointed one of the delegates of the South Carolina Conference. The following are extracts from his correspondence with Mrs. Capers:

"NEW YORK, April 26, 1832.

"AFTER as pleasant a passage as a reasonable man might hope for, we arrived here this morning. On the way, and till now, I have had no symptom of my complaint, (neuralgia,) and my general health is very good. I suffered, however, with my unsteady head during most of the voyage, and as much, nearly, as on my first voyage at sea. The preachers were very sick for the first two days, except brothers Dunwody and Bass, who were not sick at all, but did justice to their stomachs from first to last. English and Sinclair suffered most. We had no storm, nor, indeed, any rough weather. The wind, when ahead, was moderate, and for three days we had almost a dead calm. I am writing this in Bishop McKendree's room, at the house of brother Francis Hall. The Bishop is as well as I have seen him for a long time. I have nothing more worth telling, just now having landed."

"PHILADELPHIA, May 1.

"THE General Conference commenced its session this morning, and has entered upon business under favorable circumstances. Bishops McKendree, Soule, and Hedding are with us. Bishop Roberts has not yet arrived, but is daily expected. Brother Andrew and myself are most delightfully situated at brother Longacre's, (the distinguished engraver,) who, and his charming wife, are most kindly and affectionately careful of us in all respects. You

will not expect me to give any important information respecting the transactions of the Conference for some time yet. I cannot even conjecture what may be done. With respect to any thing that may be thought of respecting *myself*, I will do all I can with a good conscience to come back to Charleston and Carolina as I left; holding still my motto,

'Let me be little and unknown,
Loved and prized by God alone.'

It is possible some efforts will be made to place me in the Book Agency. But as I am not fashioned on a business model, I can, with a good conscience, excuse myself. I eat enormously, sleep soundly, and am growing fat; indeed, I never felt myself in better health, though perhaps I have been stronger than at present."

"PHILADELPHIA, May 12.

"SINCE my last we have not carried through much business to its final termination; but much has been brought into Conference, and is under consideration. The resolution I drew up at home respecting the regular and full publication of the pecuniary transactions of the Annual Conferences, so far as relates to the deficiencies of the preachers, and the widows and orphans of preachers, has passed without opposition. The Committee on Bibles, Tracts, and Sunday-school Books, adopted, and have reported, a series of resolutions which I prepared; and, what is gratifying, without one word from me in support of them. I feel pretty

confident I shall escape all other honors but that desirable one of helping some little towards the accomplishment of the business of the Church on which we are met. I have it not yet in my power to say how many Bishops we shall elect, or who will be the men. It think it pretty well ascertained, or at least enough so to authorize a guess, that if but one Bishop be elected, he will be brother Andrew or Dr. Emory. If two, these will be the men. But if three, the guess for the third is uncertain. Most of the Northern brethren say they consider we ought to have a Bishop at the South, and will vote for brother Andrew on our recommendation as the man. With respect to having a paper at Charleston, I think the chance rather doubtful. But I am glad to say there is a good prospect of getting brother Durbin as editor of the Christian Advocate and Journal, in whose hands the paper will not be liable to any objections from the South."

"PHILADELPHIA, May 18.

"I WRITE this chiefly because I know you will look for frequent information respecting my health, which was never better than at present. With regard to the Conference, you would probably feel no special interest in the acts we have passed since I spoke of it, except, perhaps, a vote for making two additional Bishops. Who they will be, we yet know not. The expectation, however, is in favor of brothers Andrew and Emory. I fear the speech-making fever, which I hoped, but in vain, would

subside as the Conference progressed, may protract our session to the close of the month almost. If any appointment should be urged upon me at this General Conference, it may *possibly* be the editorship of the Advocate. That, at least, is one which I judge most important to the South, and to which fewest objections on a personal account might be made. You are not to expect I shall be put into this editorship. Expect the reverse, and that old Charleston, good old Charleston, will be our place for awhile. It may occur, however, as a possible event, if it appear that we cannot get a suitable man, with kind feelings towards Southern interests, that I may have to go to New York."

"PHILADELPHIA, May 21.

"IN my last, after telling you that you might dismiss all apprehension of my being put into the editorship at New York, I had to say that such a disposition of me was not altogether *impossible*, though I believed it altogether *improbable*. I have all along maintained the course I had taken, to keep myself aloof from any thing like a disposition to seek, or a readiness to accept, any situation in the election of the General Conference; and still I think I shall escape, and get back to my own dear South Carolina as I came. But during to-day, there has appeared a disposition to press me a little, and I have had to say to our delegation from South Carolina, that if they, who knew best how to judge of the necessity, or otherwise, of my re-

maining in South Carolina, thought, after due deliberation, that I might be more usefully employed for the Church at New York, they might speak of me as they judged proper. I do not expect to be put into the place, and the less because I have not been sooner put forward; or, as I ought rather to say, my *name* has not been, for as to *myself*, I am, and expect to be, wholly withdrawn from every thing like a movement towards such a disposition of myself."

"MAY 22.

"WE have just finished the election for Bishops. Brother Andrew and Dr. Emory are elected. The number of votes was two hundred and seventeen, making the majority one hundred and nine. Andrew got one hundred and forty votes, and Emory one hundred and thirty-five, on the first ballot, and were thus handsomely elected at the first trial. I think you need not be anxious about the editorship."

Dr. Capers very fortunately escaped the honor and responsibility of being made Editor of the Christian Advocate and Journal. In his circumstances, and with his keen sensibilities, the post would, in all likelihood, have been painfully uncomfortable, aside altogether from the necessity of a residence in a distant State. The unreserved expression of his opinions in regard to the matter, presented in the foregoing confidential correspond-

ence with his wife, shows the true nature of the man, and sets in a fine light his scrupulous delicacy in regard to office.

In September of this year, Dr. Paine, President of LaGrange College, Alabama, in a letter informing Dr. Capers of the election of his son-in-law, the Rev. W H. Ellison, to a professorship in that college, stated his own desire to leave the institution, in order to enter upon the more active duties of the itinerant field. He added, however, that the trustees were reluctant to release him unless they could find one competent and willing to take the presidency. He therefore applied to Dr. Capers to know whether he could be prevailed on to accept that post. To this application Dr. Capers yielded at first a reluctant consent, stating that, whatever his private views of his own fitness might be, he would not hold himself absolved from the bidding of the Church; and that if the Presiding Bishop at the next session of the South Carolina Conference should judge it best, for the general interests of the Church, to sanction his acceptance of the office, and transfer him to the Tennessee Conference, he would be ready to obey. A few weeks' reflection on the subject, however, changed his views. His embarrassment lay in his own apprehension of want of scholastic qualifications. "For this cause," he says, "I must beg to decline the appointment. Could I fulfil 'in the South-west' the part, or something like the part, of 'Dr. Fisk in the North-east'—could I by accepting your call

build up the cause of Christian literature in that interesting portion of our Church and country, most gladly would I undertake it. But alas! I am not what you suppose me to be; and were I to attempt to stretch myself to the height of your kind opinion, it would only result in extreme mortification to both of us."

Similar applications were subsequently made to him in regard to the Presidency of the University of Louisiana, and that of Randolph Macon College, Virginia; but he declined in both instances.

CHAPTER VII.

Hospitality—Rev. John Hutchinson—The little mail-carrier and the overcoat—Outlay of benevolence speedily returned and doubled.

"GIVEN to hospitality"—a lover of strangers—this is one of the marks of a New Testament Bishop. The virtue inculcated in these terms was exercised by Dr. Capers, to the full extent of his means. Scarcely a day went by without witnessing some accession to his family circle, at one or other of the meals. The native bent of his disposition, his early domestic training, as well as his prominent position in the Church, made his hospitality a notable trait in his character. Preachers from a distance, in quest of health, particularly if they were supposed to be in narrow circumstances, were welcome to his house, and made to feel perfectly at home, and entertained for weeks. In all this, he was cordially seconded and sustained by his wife—one of the most amiable of her sex, who never seemed to regard for a moment any personal trouble which might be entailed upon her by the open-handed hospitalities of her husband. One out of a multitude of instances illustrating this feature

in the character of Dr. Capers, is furnished by the Rev. H. A. C. Walker, one of his colleagues in 1833, in the following incident:

"In the year 1833," says Mr. Walker, "I lived in the family of Dr. Capers, in Charleston. In the autumn of the year, the Rev. Mr. Parrish, of one of the Northern Conferences, came to Dr. C.'s, being on a Southern tour seeking relief from consumption. He sojourned with us for ten days or a fortnight, if I remember correctly, and was greatly pleased, as well he might be. The Doctor had a sort of half pony horse, which, in connection with a gig and a saddle, had done good service in aiding us in the preaching and pastoral work of the station, through the summer especially. But the year was drawing to a close, and as it was the Doctor's second year in the city, and he could not therefore be returned, he and his faithful 'Bill' must part. It was known that he was for sale. A purchaser appeared, and a fair offer was made. It occurred to Mr. Parrish that on that horse he could wander through the country as he pleased. He so said to Dr. Capers, but his funds were low. 'If he will serve you,' said the Doctor, 'you may have horse, saddle, and bridle for forty dollars; and I am only sorry I cannot afford to put him lower still.' This was far below the value of the horse. He was sold; and the grateful invalid mounted the trusty animal and set off. In my next year's circuit, I heard of 'brother Parrish,' for he had travelled and sojourned among the people, and

of the 'great bargain brother Capers had given him in that horse!' Mr. Parrish seemed to have told it everywhere with grateful exultation. I heard afterwards, that after much wandering, the horse bore the preacher safe to his home.

"In the same year, three young preachers came from the North, bearing letters of introduction from the immortal Fisk. Dr. Capers immediately found quarters for two of them, and took the third to be his own guest. He had room for no more, and this one had to share my bed. He spent a fortnight or so with us, before finding employment as a teacher. One day at table, the Doctor's eldest son, Frank, a bright, promising boy, then at the Charleston College, and who has not belied that promise, used the word '*beloved*,' in a quotation, I think, from Scripture. 'Belov-*ed*,' said his father, correcting him. 'Why so, Dr. Capers?' inquired the young scholar from New England. 'I think,' was the reply, 'there is a difference between beloved as a participle, and as an adjective.' 'But,' continued the guest with the inquiring intonation, 'I do not remember any such rule in the books.' 'Nor do I,' said the Doctor, 'and yet I can perceive a very marked distinction mentally. I would say,' he added, 'John learned his lesson well;' and then I would say, 'Dr. Fisk is a learn-ed man.' 'I have no objection at all to your distinction, Doctor; I think I like it,' said Mr. Round; for the guest was the Rev. G. H. Round, since so well and so favorably known among us.

"The former anecdote illustrates Dr. Capers's generosity of character; the latter his exactness in some, if not in all respects, in the use of words. And yet he was far, very far removed from hypercriticism."

A few years before the time referred to by Mr. Walker, an interesting young minister from the North, Hutchinson by name, received very touching proof of the disinterested kindness of Mr. Capers and his family Mr. Hutchinson was an invalid, far gone indeed in consumption. He was a lovely young man, destined to an early grave; and with scanty means was seeking the alleviations of a Southern climate during cold weather. He was welcomed into the house of Mr. Capers, and enlisted the affectionate solicitude of parents, children, and even servants. He remained with the family seven or eight months, and had a servant boy to wait on him, and sleep at night in his chamber. Far away from his own kindred, with the blight of premature decay stealing over his early prospects, Mr. Hutchinson received all the attentions which his circumstances required; and by the example of a beautiful resignation, and deep piety, and thankful spirit, showed that the kindness was worthily bestowed. At the close of his protracted stay, it was as if a member of the family were bidding the last adieus. At the vessel which was to carry him back to his native New England hills, to lie in the burial-place of his kindred, the boy, Strephon, who had waited upon him, burst

into tears, as though about to lose his own young master.

The story of John, the little postboy, is worthy of being told in this connection, although the event occurred in one of the earlier years of Mr. Capers's ministry. At a country-inn, on one of his journeys, Mr. Capers had stopped for the night, after a very cold day's ride. After supper, he found a small lad sitting by the fire, thinly clad, and with a look of anxiety in his face. The proprietor of the house presently said, "John, if I were you, I would not go to-night." At these words the little fellow's tears began to flow; and he replied, "Why did you say so? you know I must go." Mr. Capers asked what John's business was. He learned that the boy was a mail-carrier, and had to take the mail-bag twenty-one miles that night. He had no other clothing than what he then wore, all of cotton goods, and thin enough. The night was bitter, and rain and sleet were then falling. Mr. Capers told him that he must freeze to death if he persisted in going; and that if he would abandon the attempt, his employer should be informed that he had remained by the advice and persuasion of friends. To this the little fellow, in tears, said, "I must go: if I don't I shall lose my place, and then my mother and sister will starve." Shortly afterwards, the mail-carrier who brought the mail which John was to take forward arrived. He came to the fire, throwing off a large bear-skin overcoat loaded with sleet; and, with a profane expression,

declared that he was frozen through. Mr. Capers said to him, "Friend, if, with your overcoat on, you are nearly frozen, what will be the fate of this poor boy, thinly clad as he is, who has to ride twenty-one miles and carry the mail you have brought?" "He will not live to get over the swamp that is just ahead, and four miles wide," said he. Mr. Capers then went to the landlady, to purchase a quilt or blanket to cover John, who persisted that he must try to go. She said she could spare nothing of the kind. "Madam," said he, "let me have this half-worn blanket for the child; I will give you four dollars for it." "No, sir," she said, "you will all find before morning that I have no blanket to sell." Returning to the fire, he said to the owner of the overcoat, "Sir, will you sell me your overcoat for this boy?" "Yes," said he, "if I can get cost for it, eight dollars." The money was immediately paid, and Mr. Capers handed the coat to the boy, whose eyes instantly brightened. He put it on, and soon set out on his dreary ride. This purchase had exhausted Mr. Capers's money, and left him only twenty-five cents. The next morning he took formal leave of the family without asking for his bill, determining to send back, as soon as he arrived home, the amount usually charged for a night's lodging. On the part of the host, nothing was said about pay when he departed. The next night he lodged with a Presbyterian family, with whom he had no acquaintance. When the time came for family worship, his host, impressed by

his appearance and conversation that he was a religious man, invited him to join them, and to lead the devotional exercises. After prayers, he inquired if the stranger were not a minister. Mr. Capers told him who he was, and that he was returning home after a year's work on the circuit he had just travelled. Before breakfast the next morning, he said to Mr. Capers: "Friend, we do not belong to the same denomination of Christians. You are a Methodist, and I am a Presbyterian. It is, I dare say, with ministers of your denomination as with ours. You at times stand in need of a little money. Will you please accept of this?" handing him twenty dollars. On reaching home, Mr. Capers enclosed a proper amount in a letter to the tavern-keeper where he had met with the post-boy, explaining the circumstances. The money, however, was soon returned, on the ground that they never charged preachers; and he was requested to call again whenever he passed that way. Thus quickly and signally did he realize the truth of the Divine word, "Give, and it shall be given unto you, good measure."

CHAPTER VIII.

Troubles in the Church in Charleston—Transferred to the Georgia Conference and stationed at Savannah—Lewis Myers-Delivers a eulogy on Lafayette.

THE close of the year 1833 was a period of anxiety and trouble to Dr. Capers. The existing Board of Trustees of the M. E. Church in Charleston, of which he then had the pastoral charge, was made up of old and tried members. But they were exceedingly conservative in their ideas, and were much inclined to adhere strenuously to the old style of doing things, which was sufficiently slow. A somewhat faster generation had come on, who desired, with laudable zeal, to have an acceleration in the speed of these elderly brethren in the management of the temporalities of the society. Old Fogyism and Young America came into collision at the Quarterly Meeting held August 30th. A set of resolutions was introduced instructing the trustees to make certain alterations in the sittings of the church edifices. The trustees could not be got together for an interview with the committee of the Quarterly Conference. The latter party undertook to force matters; and soon there came up

a spirit of dogged resistance on the one part, and an eager determination to succeed on the other. There being no disciplinary mode of putting out of office the trustees, who went jogging on in the old way, securely covered in their rights and privileges by the existing law of the Church, the Young America party rummaged about, and exhumed from the dust and rubbish of near half a century an act of incorporation, which had the singular quality on its face of naming no individuals. There existed no record of the names of even the persons who applied for the charter. No particle of evidence could be brought to show that the communicants of the church in 1787 were the original members of the corporation; and even if that could have been done, all the original corporators were long since dead, without having perpetuated the corporation by a succession of officers and members, or even, apart from the Board of Trustees, held a single official meeting. The original charter had consequently lapsed; or at least the usage of the Methodist society in Charleston from 1784 had legalized the Board of Trustees, who, in conformity with the book of Discipline, had managed all the property affairs of the Church, and supplied by election from time to time the vacancies occurring.

Under cover of this act, now rescued from its mouldering oblivion, a "corporation" meeting was called, which passed sundry rules and by-laws, and elected a Board of Trustees; not by the first move ousting the existing Board, but electing them as

its Board, and serving them with a notice that fifteen days were allowed them to determine whether they would serve or not, under the authority of the *soi-disant* corporation. This meeting was held November 12th, and was adjourned to meet on the evening of the first Monday in December. The surcharged gun did no harm to the old Board, but its recoil was bad for the corporation cause. Matters, in the opinion of the preacher in charge, had reached the point of a revolutionary movement. He therefore addressed to the leaders of the *coup d'état* party a letter of reproof, setting forth in several distinct items the evidence of their being implicated in "disobedience to the order and discipline of the Church." The adjourned meeting was, nevertheless, held; the corporators elected nine of their own party a Board of Trustees, and twenty-five others an Executive Committee. On the 7th of December Dr. Capers took one of his colleagues with him, the Rev. H. A. C. Walker, and saw and conversed with nine of the refractory members, who had been previously addressed by him in writing. When they had severally refused to relinquish their participation in the measures and acts complained of, each one was served with a citation to trial, upon the charge of "disobedience to the order and discipline of the Church," followed by five specifications. The parties then demanded to be tried by the society. This privilege was not granted, on the ground of the invariable practice in the Charleston Methodist Society, and as being

a precedent of evil tendency in circumstances such as then surrounded the case. The trial was announced to be held December 9th. On the day previous, Sunday, it occurred to Dr. Capers, his mind being in great distress, that he would, as a last resort, try the force of a personal appeal. Accordingly at night, by his request, he was met by the gentlemen whose trial was to be held the next day; and after a touching appeal, not unmingled with tears, to their sense of religious feeling, he proposed for their signature a paper he had drawn up, which stated that, in kindness to the opinions and feelings of the ministry and brethren, they agreed that the proceedings of the two corporation meetings should be as if they had never taken place, provided that the records of the Church, deeds of conveyance, and the like, should be submitted to the Judges of the Court of Appeals for their decision as to the question of the existence of a corporation, and in whom it vested if it did exist. To this paper all present, twenty-two in number, put their signatures, and the citation to trial was withdrawn.

This promising adjustment came to nothing. Dr. Capers left Charleston December 31, to attend the session of the Georgia Conference. On his return, January 23d, 1834, he was waited on by several of the signers of the paper aforementioned, and informed that they considered themselves released from the obligation of their signatures, on the ground that they were satisfied that the refer-

ence to the Judges was impracticable. This he heard with deep regret; but as the term of his administration was now closing, he informed them that he could have no more to do with the affair, but must leave it in the hands of his successor. The session of the South Carolina Conference was held in Charleston a few days afterwards, Bishop Emory presiding. After an unavailing effort on the part of that eminent man to adjust the difficulty, affairs reached their crisis in the course of the ensuing summer; and eight of the leading members of the corporation party were cited to trial, and expelled from the communion according to the forms of the book of Discipline, notwithstanding a large number of their friends had pledged themselves to leave the Church in the event of their expulsion. The whole case furnishes a monitory lesson against attempting to go too fast; and a lesson equally monitory against the stand-still policy.

Early in the year 1834, Dr. Capers was transferred to the Georgia Conference, and stationed in Savannah. In connection with this appointment he was made Superintendent of the missions to the blacks, near Savannah, and on the neighboring islands. Bishop Emory, who presided at the sessions of the Georgia and South Carolina Conferences, specially and earnestly requested Dr. Capers to take the superintendence of these missions, although he was aware that such an arrangement would add considerably to the labors of his station.

He felt it to be important, at that stage of these missions, to have the supervision of them intrusted to one known extensively and favorably to the planters on Savannah and Ogeechee rivers. Dr. Capers cheerfully accepted these increased responsibilities. His interest in the missionary work never flagged; and his influence was highly valuable. The writer of these memoirs had the pleasure, during a visit to Savannah in the spring of that year, to accompany Dr. Capers on one of his missionary visitations, and to witness the cordial welcome tendered him by the planters. It was hard to say which was the more to be admired—the affability with which he condescended to "men of low estate" in his intercourse with the plantation slaves to whom he preached, or the elegance of his manners and conversation in circles of the highest refinement and intelligence.

What sort of preaching he deemed most suitable for plantation negroes, can best be described in his own words: "It should be *preaching;* not a dry lecturing on morals merely—much less a paraded speech of long and high-sounding words. Sermons should be short, and, of course, full of unction. As for the texts, all are yours. I know of but one gospel for all people. But we find it impracticable to hold preaching-meetings on our missions on the week-days. Although in the low-country, the main field of our missions, the labor of the plantation is assigned to the hands by daily tasks, and the tasks are done by two or three

o'clock in the afternoon in the summer months, and before sunset in the winter, the negroes move heavily to preaching; unless you would have it at midnight, when they are wide awake, and you might fall asleep yourself. Meetings for catechism, or even class-meetings, can be held in the week, but for preaching, I know no time but the Sabbath, unless they might attend wakefully at the break of day, which I never tried. Great patience is requisite with these people. They must be allowed to be themselves. If, indeed, they have taken a dream to be conversion, or any thing appears inconsistent with sound belief and vital godliness, it must be corrected forthwith, but with meekness of wisdom, and in the spirit of love. But with respect to their modes of expressing pious emotion, hold them not to a rule which they may deem unnatural. Why should the tastes and habits of refined life be made to bear as a law upon the negro? No one thinks of it in respect to other things. No: a shout that comes with a kindled countenance and flowing tears, is never to be an offence to a negro missionary."

The writer accompanied Dr. Capers also on a visit to his venerable friend, Lewis Myers, whose residence was at Goshen, in Effingham county, sixteen miles from Savannah. This patriarchal man, some eight or ten years previously, had become superannuated, after an effective ministry of a quarter of a century; a large portion of which time he filled the office of Presiding Elder. He

was of German extraction, and had the Dutch sturdiness of build and common-sense. His early advantages had been small; but his religion had made a man of him. His native shrewdness of mind had been cultivated by a good deal of reading, and much close study of the Bible, with much observation of human nature. There was, withal, a subdued vein of humor running through him; a little quaintness that made his society piquant; and a remarkable gentleness and sweetness playing round what looked like the austerity of fixed and severe habits of personal virtue. You would hardly expect such a man to show much emotion; yet he seldom preached to the close of a sermon without tears. He had preached the gospel in nearly every part of the low country of South Carolina and Georgia; and had gone abreast with such men as Tobias Gibson, Britton Capel, and James Russell: preached it in the dialect of the common people, and to the strong, hard sense of the common people, who know how to digest the pith of an argument nearly as well as the metaphysicians: preached it when the population was sparse, churches few, and travelling vastly fatiguing; and so preached it as to leave great and fruitful results behind. He belonged to a class of men of heroic mould, who could take the saddle, face a day's hard rain, swim swollen creeks, live in the cabins of the poor, eat bear-meat if necessary, and preach without manuscript every day of

the week; who went girded into the great battle-field where ignorance, vice, and semi-barbarism were to be confronted, and fought a good, honest fight, very different from the sham-battles of holiday heroes. Mr. Myers had been a man of weight in the Conference, well versed in affairs, of sound judgment, and looked up to with universal respect. Two things are worthy of note in his character: he was a man of few words, well weighed, and to the point, *and he knew when he was done, and where to stop;* and he knew also how to *decrease*—to pass gracefully off the stage, and resign to younger men, without regret or croaking, the working of a system with which his strongest and best years had been identified. Dr. Capers held him in high respect for his past services to the Church and country, and for the purity and unaffected dignity of his Christian character. He died in November, 1851; and as one of the fathers of Southern Methodism, he has left an honored memory.

In July, Dr. Capers received a communication from the Mayor of Savannah, enclosing the following resolutions passed by the City Council:

"IN COUNCIL, July 1, 1834.

"*Resolved*, That this Board have received the melancholy tidings of the decease of the venerable Lafayette with sensations of deep sorrow: that the event, though one to have been anticipated from his

advanced years, is nevertheless deplored as the loss of one of the last of those luminaries which led us to liberty and the blessings we now enjoy.

"*Resolved*, That it be recommended to the citizens of Savannah to do the last honors to his memory, by a civic and military procession, and by religious services, on a day to be named by the Mayor. That the Rev. the clergy of all denominations be requested to unite in these services; and that the Rev. Dr. Capers, the son of a Revolutionary soldier, be requested to pronounce an eulogium to his well-known merits."

To this request Dr. Capers acceded, performing the service required to the gratification of the entire community. Some, indeed, of the most admirable of his pulpit efforts were those produced under the influence of *occasions*,—and designed to show the hand of God, to vindicate his ways, or illustrate his providence in important passing events. He always made these occasions tributary to the spiritual welfare of his congregation, not their entertainment merely. He sacrificed neither good taste nor devotional feeling in handling subjects of this class: under his treatment they suggested topics of discourse which gave fresh force to admitted truths, and unwonted power to familiar ideas.

The interest felt by Dr. Capers in the welfare and improvement of young ministers, deserves mention. He was fond of repeating a saying of Bishop Asbury, "Our boys are *men*." Affable and

always accessible to his young friends, his counsels and advices were ever at their service; and his words of encouragement often came as a balm upon the spirit cast down and well-nigh dismayed by the conscious want of qualification for the solemn responsibilities of the ministerial office. The following letter was written in the autumn of 1834, to the Rev. A. W Walker, then travelling his first circuit. It furnishes a fine illustration of warmth of affection, tenderness of spirit, and wisdom of counsel. It may be read with great profit by every young preacher who wishes to make "full proof of his ministry."

"My dear Alexander:—I thank you for your very kind and affectionate letter of the 7th ult. You might doubt your having any thing to do with the duties of the ministry, if you could enter upon them without fear and trembling, or make any considerable trial of the work of an evangelist without much misgiving and an humbling sense of your insufficiency. Never forget that our adorable Lord and Master was led up into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil—certainly not for *his own sake*, as though such a preparation could be necessary to prove *him* and qualify *him* for the work of preaching the gospel; but for *our sakes*, and for the sake of all who should become his ambassadors, that it might be example and evidence to them, *to us*, of what is proper to the experience of those who are put as if in *his* stead, to plead with sinners

to be reconciled to God. The conflicts connected with your work, form an indispensable part of the qualification necessary to its acceptable and effectual performance. The more you are assaulted by Satan, the more will your profiting appear, if you cleave to Christ in faith and prayer. *He* overcame *for us*, that we might overcome *by him.*

"It is good for you to cherish a high and sacred sense of the dignity and responsibility of your calling, and humbling views of your personal fitness for so great a work. But how is this good for you? Certainly not if you give way to despondency, as though something were required of you impossible to be done; but it is good for you, as it is calculated to and shall cause you to trust in the living God; while you give yourself to study and prayer, sobriety and watching, that he who alone is able to make you a fit instrument in his work, may use you, even *you*, to glorify his name in the conversion of many. You cannot doubt but if God will use you, you shall be useful. Any thing, that shall please him, may work miracles; and without his immediate blessing, Paul or Apollos were as insignificant as the most unworthy prattlers. You find yourself deficient in knowledge? It would be melancholy, at your age, if you did not. You must feel your deficiency *now*, and that to such a degree as shall make you diligent to improve your time in study, or you will feel it *by and by*, when it will be too late to make any much advantage of it. But, I beseech you, suffer no sense

of deficiency in knowledge of any kind to influence you further than to redeem your time for improvement. If you will do this steadily and perseveringly, you shall find your account in it; and by uniting study, and preaching, and other exercises of your sacred functions, your profiting shall appear to all men; yea, you shall become an able minister of the New Testament, and that before many years. The Methodist itinerancy affords a sort of manual-labor school for preachers, the very best to qualify them for their work *if they will use it well.* The best way to learn to preach is in the practice of preaching.

"Carry all your discouragements, difficulties, troubles, to God, and go to him with them expecting the help which you ask. You will scarcely find it profitable, either to yourself or others, to say much, or indeed any thing, about them to the people among whom you labor. To a confidential friend, especially if he is himself experienced in the trials of the ministry, *our ministry*, you may open your mind to profit, when occasion serves.

"May God bless you, my dear brother, and keep you faithful and approved in all things.

"Your very sincere friend and brother,

"W CAPERS.

"P. S.—You are always prudent in your intercourse with females. You cannot be too much so."

CHAPTER IX.

Removal to Columbia—Accepts the Professorship of Moral and Intellectual Philosophy in the South Carolina College—Reasons for an early resignation—Denominational education.

HAVING finished his year of pastoral service in Savannah, Dr. Capers was transferred by the presiding Bishop to South Carolina, and connected with the station of Columbia, the Rev. Malcom McPherson being preacher in charge. The object of this arrangement was to meet a very general wish on the part of his clerical brethren, and of the public generally, that he should take a post in the State College. The fortunes of the institution had waned under the administration of Dr. Cooper, and public opinion demanded the inauguration of different principles at this seat of learning on which the treasure of the State had been lavished without stint. It was thought that Dr. Capers might be instrumental in bringing about a turn in the tide, and restoring the college to the position it had lost in the public confidence. Negotiations had been opened with him by a committee of the trustees, empowered for the purpose of supplying the chair of Moral and Intellectual Philosophy and Evidences of Christianity, until the regular meeting of the

Board. So far as mere feeling and inclination went, Dr. Capers would have much preferred an arrangement contemplated by the Bishop, which looked to his taking the superintendence of the colored missions. But it was always a principle with him to hold private preferences and personal feeling subordinate to the judgment of his brethren, so far as public service was concerned. Being urged to take the Professorship, he submitted the question to the judgment of the Conference. Bishop Andrew, whose opinions on the subject of Christian education have always been sound and far-seeing, took occasion to say, that in view of his being appointed, at some short time to come, President of the college, as was then anticipated, he thought Dr. Capers ought to accept the place now offered him; but added, that he doubted if the Church ought to give up her claim upon his labors for any *subordinate* appointment. The Conference then unanimously voted its advice in accordance with the views thus expressed; and he accepted forthwith the Professorship.

Removing his family to the campus, he entered upon his scholastic duties. Early in June the trustees met; but instead of electing him President, as had been anticipated, they created a new professorship—that of the Evidences of Christianity and Sacred Literature—and made it the duty of the officer holding that chair to perform Divine service in the college chapel; requesting the other professors to make arrangements for instructing in

Moral and Intellectual Philosophy until a President should be elected. This appointment Dr. Capers felt himself constrained to decline. In his letter signifying this intention to the Board of Trustees, he reminds them that he had never solicited any appointment in the college, but at any time had only been willing to take a part in establishing the college on such principles as might make it a desirable place for the sons of Christian parents generally, or otherwise no part in it on any account whatever; that he had perceived indications, both as to the Presidency and the organization of the college, calculated to discourage the hope that religious principles were intended to have a controlling influence in the establishment; that the duties assigned him in the recent appointment amounted to little else than a chaplaincy; and that the bare title of professor could scarcely be expected to shield him from the possible obloquy of being considered only as "*a hired, paid, and salaried priest.*" In view, therefore, of the only moving consideration for his coming into the college, and under a sense of heavy public responsibility, he begged respectfully to decline the appointment.

These were good and sufficient reasons. There is no likelihood that the trustees meant any thing but what was entirely respectful to him; and certainly, by putting the pulpit of the chapel into his hands exclusively, they placed at his command a powerful agency for moulding the religious sentiments of the foremost young men of the country.

He was told the day after the meeting of the Board, by one of its members, in a somewhat facetious way, that they had elected him "professor of religion!" He had, it must be confessed, some grounds for the apprehension that the appointment of a preacher to do the praying and other parts of Divine service for the college, was considered a sufficient concession to the demands of Christian opinion in the State. If he had been satisfied that a cordial, sustained, religious coöperation could have been reasonably anticipated on the part of his colleagues in the faculty, he might, perhaps, have hesitated as to the question of *duty*. Most likely he would have retained his connection with the college. For the first time the religious communion of which he was a minister had now a representative in the Board of Instruction in an institution which, in proportion to their number and means, they were compelled to support. To a man of his breadth of view, it must have appeared that a monopoly of liberal education in the hands of the other leading sects of the State, to the exclusion of his own, tended, by a silent but irresistible influence, to consign the excluded denomination to ignorance and obscurity. To such a policy, whatever may have occasioned it, he must have been opposed, on the grounds alike of social equality, civil liberty, and religious principle. But, on the other hand, the presiding officer of the Annual Conference had expressed, without reserve, the opinion that Dr. Capers could not be spared for

any lower permanent post than the Presidency; and in this pronounced opinion the Conference had coincided. Besides, his age and public position required, at the very least, that it should be known to him who was to be honored with that appointment. The choice *might* fall upon a layman distinguished, indeed, for learning, but an enemy at heart to all vital Christianity. With susceptible young men, one sneer from such a man would be sufficient to neutralize the effect of a dozen sermons from the chaplain. And, in fine, to his high and scrupulous sense of delicacy, any liability to the imputation of mercenary motives in the exercise of his ministry was abhorrent. The late President had voluntarily exonerated Methodist ministers from the sweeping charges he had flung from his terrible pen against the clergy. And now, was a Methodist minister, standing at the head of the Methodist denomination in South Carolina, to be the first to illustrate, within the very halls which had resounded with the echoes of the invective, the supposed frailty of the whole class?

His resignation lost to the Methodist Church the incalculable benefit which his pulpit ministrations and professional teachings would have conferred upon many of her sons. The Protestant Episcopalians, the Presbyterians, and the Baptists have in turn been represented in the chapel ministrations of the South Carolina College; the Methodist Church has not. Nor has there ever been a Methodist layman—although there are numbers in the

State fully qualified to serve—allowed to sit in the Board of Trustees. And it is a curious coincidence, that at the very time when, at length, the Methodist Church in South Carolina was to have a college of her own, the President of the State College, a Presbyterian minister, alike eminent for ability and influence, published a letter to the Governor of South Carolina against *denominational colleges*. The most admirable feature in the whole affair has been the profound resignation and pious freedom from resentment which has marked the contented spirit of the denomination thus ignored and thrust aside.

But the subject is too serious for levity. "I could write down the names," said Dr. Olin in 1844, "of scores of educated men, in every part of the land—many of them eminent for the great talents and learning with which they adorn the highest stations in Church and State—the sons of Methodist parents, and the rightful heritage of Methodism, who were lost to the denomination, and not a few of them to Christianity, by being exposed to alien influences at the theatre of their literary training. I have been curious in collecting this sort of statistics. My observations and inquiries have extended more or less to the larger half of the United States, and I give it as the proximate result of these investigations, that a large majority of Methodist young men—not less, I think, than three-fourths of all who have been educated in colleges not under our own direction—have been lost

to our cause. Many of them have gone to other denominations, many more have gone to the world. All were the legitimate children of the Church. They were her hope, and they should have become the crown of her rejoicing. But for her own grievous neglect to provide for the nurture of the sons whom God gave her, many of these had now been standard-bearers in her battles, and shining lights in her firmament. My heart sickens at such contemplations of the past, and I fervently pray that God may save us from similar folly and humiliation in years to come."

It was the avowed sentiment of Dr. Capers, that "he who is not zealous for religion in that form of it which he most approves, can illy pretend to be zealous for it in some other form." He was, consequently, a *decided* Methodist, though at the farthest possible remove from the bigotry which considers its own modification of Christianity to comprehend *all* of it that is trustworthy in the world. Richard Watson prefixed to his autograph in Dr. Capers's album, at the London Conference, the following beautiful *dictum:* "The two great pillars on which the system of Wesleyan Methodism rests, are universal *love* and universal *holiness*." No teacher or disciple of the Wesleyan school believed this more fully than Dr. Capers. But the catholic feeling harmonized fully with the firm and intelligent adherence to denominational peculiarities. He could not, therefore, be insensible to the important claims of education under the control of his own

communion. We have seen in what point of view he regarded the influence of Dr. Fisk, in the Northeast, in this department of public service. Without considering himself to possess the peculiar aptitudes of taste and scholarly daily habit which make a man an accomplished instructor, and with a clerical training in the itinerant field for twenty-five years, such as made the action, freedom, variety, and triumphs of that field the delight and home of his heart, he had, nevertheless, upon the compulsion of a sense of duty, yielded all his private preferences, and taken a chair in a literary institution. And wherefore? Because the convictions of his maturest judgment satisfied him that *religion* is the saving salt of education; and that the circumstances of his native State required imperatively that at least he should make an effort in that direction. The embarrassments he encountered have been adverted to.

The prevalence of such convictions in connection with the confessed difficulties and delicacies presented by the very constitution of colleges supported by the State, has led to the establishment of denominational institutions. The Address of the Bishops to the General Conference of 1850, in language eloquent and forcible, sets forth the views of the ablest minds in the Methodist Church on this subject. They say: "Our Church has long since made its decision in favor of this important adjunct (education) to the work of enlightening and converting the world. If we would exert our

proper share of influence in directing the movements of mind and heart in this stirring age, we must connect Methodism with whatever is true and valuable, pure and beautiful, in science and letters; and our children must identify the scriptural doctrines and the well-tried and time-honored institutions of the Church of their fathers with the recollections and associations, not only of the Sabbath-school room, but also of the halls of learning, and whatever is erudite and polished or eloquent in the utterance of professional instruction. Our aim is not merely to render Methodism respectable by associating it with profound scholarship, but mainly to imbue this scholarship with the principles and spirit of a pure and hallowed Christianity."

To do this effectually, the faculty of instruction must find a representative and utter a voice in the chapel pulpit. The President, if he is, as he should be, a member of an Annual Conference, is the connecting link between that body and the college; between the pulpit and the students. It is a deplorably shallow philosophy, or common sense either, which conceives of the congregation of students addressed by an officer, in the character of a gospel preacher, as a parcel of youngsters who had as well be anywhere else, so far as profit or effective influence is concerned, as in a college chapel. These young men are, many of them, to form your future travelling preachers, your class-leaders and trustees, as well as teachers, statesmen,

agriculturists, doctors, and lawyers. They are at the most impressible period of human life. They can be made, and *are* made, to feel the power of Christian truth. From no human lips will they listen to it with deeper reverence than from the lips of an admired, beloved professor, who also discourses to them on literary subjects in the recitation-room. No year passes without some college revival, that can be traced to sources like these. Dr. Fisk's biographer, in describing the preaching of that gifted man in the chapel of the Wesleyan University, says, that after one of these displays of powerful Christian oratory, a lady of cultivated mind—a stranger in the place—as she came away said to another, with a half-stifled voice, "Have you any irreligious students in your college?" and on being answered in the affirmative, added, "Astonishing!"

CHAPTER X.

Lays the corner-stone of the Cokesbury School—George Holloway—Visits Georgia—Stationed in Charleston—Congregational singing—Appointed Editor of the Southern Christian Advocate—Great fire in Charleston—Collections for rebuilding the churches—Centenary of Methodism.

In the course of the summer of 1835, Dr. Capers went to Abbeville District, and, by invitation of the Board of Trustees of the Cokesbury School, delivered an address at the laying of the corner-stone of the principal building. This institution, which is under the control of the South Carolina Conference, has had an eminently useful and popular career. Among its rectors stand the names of instructors of high reputation in their profession. The munificence of Mr. George Holloway, a Methodist gentleman of comfortable property, who died, leaving no children, has given an endowment to the school, which secures the education and board of eight or ten sons of ministers of the South Carolina Conference, the preference being given to the sons of deceased or superannuated preachers. A long line of useful results will hand down to posterity his honored name as a public benefactor.

In the latter part of the year, Dr. Capers paid a visit to Georgia, spending a little time with his attached friends, Dr. Branham, of Eatonton, and Mr. Foard, of Milledgeville. At the session of the Conference in the winter, he was appointed to Charleston, preacher in charge, his colleagues being Messrs. J. Sewell, McColl, and Gamewell. This was one of his most efficient and successful years in the pastoral work. His preaching was full of unction; a gracious influence went along with it; and the membership among the whites increased full thirty per cent.

A peculiarity in Dr. Capers's pulpit ministrations may here be noted. His invariable habit was to raise the tunes himself, to the hymns he used in Divine worship. He had a fine voice, clear, musical, and cultivated. One of Charles Wesley's immortal hymns, on his lips, as the leader of some fifteen hundred voices—half of them voices of the blacks in the crowded galleries—sung to one of the old congregational melodies, with no restraints of false refinement, has many a time carried the assembly to heaven's gate. The fervor and fire of the primitive singing were never sacrificed by him to the conventionalities of choir-singing, where a half-dozen voices *perform* for the mute congregation. He never praised God vicariously. He never encouraged his congregation to do by proxy this part of their duty. He would have enjoyed the smack of the following bit of racy sarcasm recently let off by a somewhat eccentric

Congregational minister at the North, who thus describes his feelings while attending Divine service at a Methodist church: "The patient congregation stood up meekly to be sung to, as men stand under rain where there is no shelter. Scarcely a lip moved. No one seemed to hear the hymn, or to care for the music. How I longed for the good old Methodist thunder! One good burst of old-fashioned music would have blown this modern singing out of the windows, like wadding from a gun! Men may call this an improvement, and genteel! Gentility has nearly killed our churches, and it will kill Methodist churches, if they give way to its false and pernicious ambition. We know very well what good old-fashioned Methodist music was. It had faults enough, doubtless, against taste, but it had an *inward purpose and a religious earnestness* which enabled it to carry all its faults, and to triumph in spite of them! It *was* worship. Yesterday's music was tolerable singing, but very poor worship. We are sorry that just as our churches are beginning to imitate the former example of Methodist churches, and to introduce melodies that the people love, and to encourage universal singing in the congregation, our Methodist brethren should pick up our cast-off formalism in church music. It will be worse with them. It will mark a greater length of decline."

In May, 1836, Dr. Capers attended the session of the General Conference, held at Cincinnati. The principal interest which attaches to this session is

found in the action of the delegates from the various Annual Conferences on the subject of abolitionism. The position of the Methodist Episcopal Church on that question was defined in the following resolution, adopted by a vote of one hundred and twenty in favor, and fourteen against:

"*Resolved*, That they (the delegates of the Annual Conferences) are decidedly opposed to modern abolitionism, and wholly disclaim any right, wish, or intention to interfere in the civil and political relation between master and slave, as it exists in the slaveholding States of this Union."

To modern researches, this is doubtless a profoundly mythical passage in the history of a Church which is now with cool effrontery pronounced at the North to have been always abolitionist to the backbone.

Resolutions were also passed, authorizing the publication of a weekly religious journal at Charleston, called the Southern Christian Advocate, of which Dr. Capers was elected editor. The lapse of ten years had shown that a great central organ at New York, however ably conducted, could not supersede the home demand for presses in distant but influential portions of the Connection. Besides, a very general feeling had begun to pervade the Southern States, hostile to the circulation of Northern newspapers, religious as well as secular. Many of these were preaching up a crusade against the domestic institutions of the South; and self-defence as well as self-respect demanded that

there should be an adequate supply of Southern journals.

The first number of the Southern Christian Advocate was published June 21st, 1837. Dr. Capers found himself a second time afloat on the troubled waters of editorial life. Although he continued to preach every Sunday, yet he was relieved of the cares of the pastoral work. He had no printing-office: the paper was printed by a publishing house, by the job; and the editor acted as his own clerk in keeping the accounts. There was a good deal of petty drudgery involved, that wasted time and tried the temper. Supplies of cash would sometimes run short at the close of the week. Mistakes would occasionally get into the mail-books. His constitutional sensitiveness would be touched at this and the other points; and then he would write with too sharp a quill. In a word, journalism did not suit the genius of the man. A sense of duty carried him along; but he could hardly bring himself up to the full appreciation of the importance and wide-reaching influence of the vocation. He lacked enthusiasm and inspiration. He did not *warm* to a work which was not to him a labor of love. He fought up bravely, however, against all discouragements until the coming on of the ensuing General Conference, and then gave up journalism for ever. He said that editorship had been "a furnace of insufferable fires" to him. "How could I be willing to pass what of life remains to me, in the perpetual irritations of the last three

years? I would rather wander through the earth on foot, preaching Christ, than be the editor of a religious newspaper." The Southern Christian Advocate was, nevertheless, a very observable improvement on the Wesleyan Journal. His editorials were much more elaborate, his selections more varied and adapted to the popular taste. He stood up firmly for the rights of his section in the ecclesiastical connection. He was earnest and high-minded in his advocacy of all the great measures subsidiary to the spread of Christian influence—educational, missionary, and literary. For complete success, however, his editorial writing lacked dramatic and pictorial power, was a trifle too polemical, and often showed that the pen moved "*invitâ Minerva.*"

Late in April, 1838, a disastrous fire took place in Charleston. It laid in ruins the richest and most populous part of the city, destroying three millions of property. The glare of the conflagration was seen eighty miles at sea, and the explosions in blowing up houses were heard eighteen miles off. Four houses of worship and one lecture-room were destroyed. Among these was Trinity Church, a wooden building, the largest of the Methodist churches in the city. The old church in Cumberland street had been removed a short time previously, and a new brick church was in process of erection. This was destroyed also, with the workshop of the contractor, and a large amount of materials. On the Sunday after the fire, the

Methodists held service in the market, morning and afternoon, Dr. Capers officiating. Crowds of people were present, and the worship was as solemn and undisturbed as though it had been held in a church. The congregation of St. Philip's Church (Protestant Episcopalian) immediately and very kindly tendered the use of a large wooden building, called the Tabernacle, to the destitute Methodist congregations; and this was gratefully accepted and used until the new churches were erected. On the 30th of April, a meeting of the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church was held, the Rev. Bond English, preacher in charge, in the chair; at which it was resolved that a circular should be sent to the ministers of the South Carolina and Georgia Conferences, asking assistance in rebuilding Trinity and Cumberland Churches; and that provision should be made for employing an editor, *pro tem.*, for the Southern Christian Advocate, in order that Dr. Capers might travel through the State soliciting aid for the same purpose.

The Doctor cheerfully accepted this mission of mercy. Mr. English edited the paper, and he set out on a tour through the middle and upper districts of South Carolina, commencing in May, and preaching nearly every day, sometimes twice a day, until the close of July. This laborious tour he performed on horseback, during one of the hottest summers that had been known for many years. The result of his earnest and eloquent appeals was, in subscriptions and cash, the noble

sum of thirteen thousand dollars and a little upwards. He had the pleasure of dedicating Trinity Church when it was completed.

The year 1839 was the memorable Methodistic year, in which Methodism completed its first centennial period. This centenary was celebrated throughout the world as a jubilee. It was marked as an occasion not only of deep religious joy, but of unprecedented liberality on the part of the members and friends of the Church. The originating impulse was given in England, where a million of dollars was contributed in free-will offerings of grateful love, for the benefits received from God, through Methodist instrumentalities; the key-note having been struck by the first contribution, which was of a thousand guineas by a widow lady. Dr. Capers threw himself into this movement with characteristic energy. Appeal followed appeal in the columns of the Advocate; and the fervid editorials stirred up answering fire in every direction. The following paragraph is a specimen:

"Never was there such a time for exertion in the cause of charity as the present, or a time when the efforts of the sons of benevolence were likely to produce so rich a result. The Church summons all her children to her assistance in a great effort to place her institutions, one and all, on a basis answerable to their importance, and that shall give them the measure of efficiency they ought to possess, alike for her advantage and the good of mankind. The appeal is irresistible.

None can hold back from the performance of his duty, or advance to its performance with a divided heart. 'The divisions of Reuben' cannot arise, nor Gilead abide beyond Jordan, nor Dan remain in his ships, nor Asher continue on the sea-shore; but as Zebulun and Naphtali, we will all go up to the help of the Lord against the mighty. Indeed, we have already gone up, and the work is begun in the face of our foes. To halt or retreat we cannot. The shout of triumph is heard in our van, and soon the remotest rear shall resound with the voice of thanksgiving. But let us be doing. Meetings in every town, meetings in every populous country-place, meetings in every large society: let there be meetings; and *at once;* let there be meetings."

On the 25th October, the centenary was celebrated with religious services throughout the country. The occasion was everywhere realized as a time of special spiritual refreshment. The contributions in the Georgia and South Carolina Conferences largely exceeded one hundred thousand dollars. Many who hailed that day with pious exultation, have passed to their everlasting homes above. None of those who took part in those blessed solemnities shall witness the dawn of the second centenary day. But they have bequeathed to the world results which shall move on to the end of time.

CHAPTER XI.

General Conference of 1840—Conversion of his son William—Appointed Missionary Secretary for the South—Preaches the funeral sermon of Mrs. Andrew.

THE General Conference of 1840 was held at Baltimore. The week before the delegates left Charleston, there was a camp-meeting held in the vicinity of the city. The venerable Dr. Lovick Pierce was one of the preachers from a distance who were present. His text on Sunday was: "Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold; but he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved." This subject was handled with the skill, force, and sweep of a master of pulpit oratory. The causes which led to the abounding of iniquity were traced with a power of delineation absolutely terrific at times; and particularly so when the preacher came to consider the blight and mildew spread over society by the example and influence of public men who had no fear of God, no love of virtue. Then came, in striking contrast, a picture of the militant virtue which treads down soft effeminacy, resists to the

last extremity every debasing appetite, and maintains to the end its purity, loveliness, and dignity with manly valor; and the true and steadfast love which is the soul of all piety—full of loyalty to Christ—finding in God's favor its highest heaven of enjoyment. The first part of the sermon cut with an edge of steel into the hoary crest of social iniquity, and with intrepid spirit and full strength clove down the towering front of hydra-headed vice; the latter part harnessed the coursers of the sun, and drove the victor agonistes, in a chariot of fire, to the gate of heaven. Robert Newton preached the next Sunday in the Light Street Church of Baltimore, and was heard by several who had listened to Dr. Pierce at the camp-meeting. The shade of the great Wesleyan orator will pardon the writer for saying, that the comparison of the two efforts was wholly in favor of the camp-meeting sermon.

Among those who were brought under deep religious concern at the meeting just referred to, was the second son of Dr. Capers, who shortly afterwards found "the pearl of great price" in finding Christ as his personal, all-sufficient Saviour. He subsequently entered the travelling ministry in the South Carolina Conference. Dr. Capers, who was then in Baltimore attending the General Conference, soon received the intelligence of his son's conversion. This threw a gleam of unutterable joy over his spirit. He wrote immediately to William the following deeply interesting letter:

"MY VERY DEAR SON:—When I wrote to you a few days ago, my most anxious hope had not anticipated so much—by any means so much—in so short a time, as I have had the delightful, nay, rapturous pleasure of learning from Susan's letter by brother Sewell this day. My dear boy, hold fast. As sure as you live, and there is a soul in your body, let fools say what they will, you will be made for both worlds if you hold fast the mercy you have received, and acknowledge always the Lord Jesus Christ. Thousands of silver and gold were as nothing to this. I thank God, I bless his holy name with joy unspeakable, that he gave you courage to acknowledge him on the Tuesday night at the altar in Trinity Church, on Thursday night, the 30th April, at the love-feast, where you joined the Church. And you found on Saturday night the good of it, when you found peace in believing. Blessed be God!

"You must never give back; and that you may not, you must watch against evil and be constant to prayer. Expect to be tempted much, and in every way. The devil will seek, nay, *seeks*, to destroy you by every plausible suggestion, and every form of attack. I told you before that if you felt at any time that you had lost ground, or done wrong, or in any way grieved the Holy Spirit, you should by no means yield to discouragement, as though you could not recover, or not permanently persevere, but renew and redouble your supplications for pardon and peace. This is the way still,

and will always be the way for you to hold on and not fail. But *now*, you need to be advised against that stratagem of your enemy by which he almost universally assails young converts, and frequently to their cost, by persuading them that they have been mistaken, and have not experienced a genuine work of grace. I suffered much and long from this quarter myself. But without waiting to reason about the matter, carry it straight to the throne of grace, and ask light from above. 'Ask, and you shall receive.' But if you even fall into darkness of mind, and even if you are sure that this has been induced by something you have done wrong, still, as I have said, go to your knees. Go and make haste to confess and humble yourself at the foot of the cross, and you shall soon have light and life again. I am glad that you speak to brother Walker freely. Do so by all means. Do not be backward to tell him all that troubles you, and may God most graciously bless you. Read the Scriptures, and pray in secret. Guard against whatever might betray you into wrong tempers, and be constant to your class. I have much joy of you, my son, and pray unceasingly that God may most graciously bless you with his protection, guidance, and grace, by the Holy Spirit, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

"Your rejoicing father, W CAPERS.

"May 9, 1840."

William was then about fifteen years of age: his

very youth, with the native vivacity of his temper, gave an increased depth of tenderness and solicitude to his father's feelings on the occasion of his making a religious profession. Two days after the foregoing letter was written, Mrs. Capers received one, from which the following extract will show how the father's heart throbbed on with the quickened pulse of joy:

"What can I write to you about so properly as about William? And yet I do not suppose I need say any thing to impress you with any feeling additional to what you have on his account. O, how much tenderness, faithfulness, and continual counsel he must reasonably require to keep him steadily on as he has begun! Nor need I say a word to impress you, or his brother or sisters, with any additional feeling to what you have of the infinite importance to him, for both worlds, of his maintaining his religious course. If William holds on, and you and I live to see him a man, we shall rejoice for the day he was born. A man he will be, to bless us and the Church of God. O no; I write not to advise you to watch over him with continual and faithful tenderness, advising him, joining with him in religious conversation and devotion, and the like; for I know you cannot need it—you cannot fail of any thing in your power to do for him; but I write because my mind and heart are as yours are, and I can scarcely think of any thing but William. Blessed be God for this great mercy, and may his divine goodness keep the lad for evermore."

A couple of weeks later he says: "I am exceeding full of comfort for you all, so that often as my thoughts go home, (and that is as often as they are not held back on business,) they salute you all with an emotion which nobody else could feel. Sometimes I feel as if my warfare was accomplished—or as if I had reached a summit on my pilgrim-way of trouble and temptation, and saw the clouds and darkness which had persecuted my soul rolled back afar, and a path of sunshine opening before me. William's conversion alone has given me, as it were, a new heavens and earth. Take care of him; make allowances; be faithful to him every day and hour, but be very tender. Blessed be the Lord God, whose mercy is everlasting."

At this General Conference, Dr. Capers was appointed chairman of a committee to prepare a letter to the British Conference. In the address, which was written by him, the position of the Methodist Episcopal Church in reference to slavery—a topic which had been referred to in the Letter of the British Conference—was defined in the following clear and emphatic terms:

"Of these United States, (to the government and laws of which, 'according to the division of power made to them by the Constitution of the Union, and the Constitutions of the several States,' we owe and delight to render a sincere and patriotic loyalty,) there are several which do not allow of slavery. There are others in which it is allowed, and there are slaves; but the tendency of the laws,

and the minds of the majority of the people, are in favor of emancipation. But there are others in which slavery exists so universally, and is so closely interwoven with their civil institutions, that both do the laws disallow of emancipation, and the great body of the people (the source of laws with us) hold it to be treasonable to set forth any thing, by word or deed, tending that way. Each one of all these States is independent of the rest and sovereign, with respect to its internal government, (as much so as if there existed among them no confederation for ends of common interest,) and therefore it is impossible to frame a rule on slavery proper for our people in all the States alike. But our Church is extended through all the States, and it would be wrong and unscriptural to enact a rule of discipline in opposition to the Constitution and laws of the State on this subject; so also would it not be equitable or scriptural to confound the positions of our ministers and people, so different are they in different States, with respect to the moral question which slavery involves."

When the Address was presented to the General Conference for adoption, a division was called for by the leader of the abolitionist party; and on counting the votes for the adoption of the portion relating to slavery, one hundred and fourteen members voted for it, and eighteen in the negative. This, then, was the position of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1840, as expounded by her highest assembly.

At this General Conference the territory of the Church was divided into three missionary departments, and Dr. Capers was appointed secretary for the Southern division. The general interests of the missionary work within this district were intrusted to his oversight; and in the performance of his official duties, it was necessary that he should travel at large, preach on the subject, and hold missionary meetings, attending, besides, as many sessions of the Annual Conferences as possible. This was a large field of labor, presenting some attractive features, but not a few difficulties and discouragements. It entailed, beyond doubt, protracted absences from home, and fatiguing routes of travel. For four years this work occupied the time and attention of Dr. Capers. He removed his family from Charleston to Oxford, Georgia, and attended, during the autumn and winter, several Conferences. In the spring of the year 1841 he made an extensive Western tour, leaving Oxford about the first of April, and visiting Columbus, Georgia, Montgomery, Tuskaloosa, Columbus, Mississippi, Jackson, Vicksburg, Grand Gulf, Port Gibson, Washington, and Natchez. This journey was performed with horse and sulky. He met all his appointments, and enjoyed fine health.

In a letter from Natchez there is found the following beautiful passage: "O, I have borne the cross, and the cross sustains me. I have gone back to the time of my youth, when I had a little strength, and have felt my strength renewed. God has been

with me of a truth, in all my way; and more and more has he been with me. Blessed be his name. I wish ardently for but one thing—his blessing upon you all, and his guiding hand, even as he has guided me, as long as you live, and for ever. Will he not be your God from henceforth, and even for evermore? Surely he will. Will not his blessing, too, prove your salvation for ever? Trust in him. Let all my house fear God and serve him, and it shall be well with them, for he hath promised it. The blessing of God Almighty, given in Christ Jesus, be with you."

At Natchez he embarked horse and sulky on a Mississippi steamer, and reached Memphis on the 21st May. The last evening he spent on the steamboat, a petition from the ladies was handed him by Judge Covington, requesting a sermon. With this request he complied, of course, preaching on a text which led him to show that religion is founded in knowledge, and not in ignorance or superstition; and to press the necessity of applying to the acquirement of that knowledge in the only way in which it can be obtained.

From Memphis he visited his brother, the Rev. B. H. Capers, in Haywood county, spending a week with him, but preaching during the time, at Summerville and Brownsville. Filling an appointment at Jackson, Tennessee, on the last Sunday of May, he spent the following Sunday at Nashville; and preaching in the prominent towns on his return route, he reached home the last of June. In the

autumn he made another three months' tour, through the Carolinas and Virginia, attending the session of the Virginia Conference at Portsmouth. This route carried him through the scenes of his youth. One of his appointments was at Lodebar, Sumter District, South Carolina. He says: "I preached to a respectably large congregation, in which there were but two individuals who belonged to the neighborhood, even so late as 1821. Not one grown person of those days is left. I visited the hallowed spot where my father, and wife, and first son, and brother-in-law lie buried—visited it alone, and felt the humbling lesson of the grave. Ah, me! why am I not more holy? I can never live in that neighborhood; and yet I feel an indescribable interest in it. It seems to be curtained with grave-clothes; every thing serving to remind me of the dead."

In January, 1842, Dr. Capers attended the session of the South Carolina Conference at Charlotte. He was much encouraged by the decided opinion expressed by Bishop Waugh that his labors as Missionary Secretary were eminently useful, and ought by no means to be discontinued. He says: "I hope it may be actually so. Truly, it is not pleasant to the flesh to be so continually going, and to so great distances from home; nor is it in any way desirable to be placed in an almost boundless field, where at every point work is wanted to be done, and one can do so little for the whole. But the great consideration is to be useful; and if

in this wide field I can be more useful than in another, well; let me still give myself and serve on." In April he visited the missions to the blacks in South Carolina, and then went to New York, where he attended the anniversary of the Missionary Society. "The brethren here," he says, "receive me with great kindness, and no one with more than brother Lane. Dear, good man, I reckon I shall never meet him while I live, without remembering the mattress on the floor, on which his honored bones were put wearily to rest in our house, once, in Charleston."

In June, by invitation of Bishop Andrew, Dr. Capers preached the funeral sermon of the lamented Mrs. Andrew—a lady of peculiar excellences of mind and heart, the closing scene of whose life is thus described by Dr. Longstreet: "For many months before her death she looked forward to her approaching dissolution with calmness and composure; but entertaining no higher hopes, it is believed, than to die in peace and without fear. But about a week before she was taken from earth, it pleased God to give her such a bright manifestation of his presence, and of her acceptance, that she broke forth into shouts of triumph. Thenceforth her little strength was spent in glorifying God, calling on her friends to rejoice with her, encouraging Christians, counselling sinners, and consoling her family. For the remaining week of her life, no cloud intervened between her and heaven. In response to a brother's question,

when she could no longer speak, she signified by repeated motions of the head that God was still near to her, and that her way was clear. She embraced religion at the age of thirteen, cherished it for about thirty-three years, and died in its triumphs, in her forty-sixth year."

CHAPTER XII.

Removes from Oxford to Charleston—Makes the tour of the South-western Conferences—Visits his aunt in Kentucky—Incidents of travel—Maum Rachel.

In the latter part of 1842, Dr. Capers removed his family from Oxford to Charleston. In the spring of the following year, after having attended the sessions of several Conferences during the winter, he made a tour of the missionary stations in the low country. Frequent articles appeared from his pen in the Southern Christian Advocate on the subject of missions, during the summer. In July, his daughter, Susan Bethia, was married to Professor Stone, of Emory College. About the middle of September, he set out on a long Western tour, and was absent from home nearly five months. He attended the sessions of the South-western Conferences, beginning with the Tennessee Conference, held at Gallatin.

Having time between the session of the Tennessee and Memphis Conferences to make a brief visit to a venerable relative whom he had never seen, he left Nashville on the night of the 27th October. There had been snow in the course of the day. "So, taking the hint," he says, "I bought a Mackinaw blanket to wrap up in for the night, in the stage.

The stage, however, proved to be a nondescript vehicle, more like a wagon than a coach, made for a road which defied all springs, and tested the utmost strength of any thing that could be made of wood and iron; and such was the violence of the jolting over rocks imbedded in mud, that neither blanket nor cloak could I keep wrapped about me, but had to use arms, and hands, and feet to sustain myself against the bounding, thumping stage, that it should not bruise me. The driver was young and reckless—one of the sort to see better and drive faster in the dark than in daylight; so about two o'clock in the night, he ran out of the road and upset us in, fortunately, one of the few spots where it was all mud and no rocks. No harm happened by the upset, except that being in the mud was an increase of my exposure, in a night when (so soon after summer) the ground was hard with frost and the water covered with ice. I took cold, of course."

He found Mrs. Allen at Russellville. She was the only surviving sister of his mother: a venerable lady, seventy-five years of age, who had not seen a single member of her family after leaving South Carolina, fifty years previously. She had been, from the formation of the first Methodist Society in the parishes of her native State, true and steady in her Christian profession; and was, perhaps, the only individual at that time alive of the generation who grew up with her in the section of country where she was born. "I mean," said the Doctor,

"for my dear mother's sake, to go and sit down with her, and let her talk it all over her own way, for a day at least." He enjoyed the visit very much. It carried him back to the days of childhood, and stirred the memory of life's young dreams. His aunt's face recalled the early vision of a mother's smiles. "I find myself," he said after the interview, "more than ever curious to know my mother. Surely when I get to heaven, (for I do expect to get there,) it will be the very first recognition I shall seek to make: if my dear Anna should not rather be first among created ones. I never knew my mother since my infant smiles to her caresses. She died as soon as I could call her name. But I cannot tell how much I love my mother; and I feel that it is more and more as I grow older. Shall I not know that she is my mother, in the world above? I think I shall. And if so, shall I introduce to her those whom God has given me, those who have gone before me; or will she know me, an old man, for the infant she left, and bring my wife and children to meet me? There is a veil upon it, not to be lifted before the time. But O, let us make haste, sure haste to that time. Our friends will not be in the way of our supreme and infinite adoration of the Lord our Redeemer, our God and Saviour, in that world. They need not be in this world, though we know them and love them with the utmost ardor. May God keep us by his grace, and then we shall be sure to find that whatever may be the constitution of our

nature in the life to come, it shall be what is infinitely happiest for us, and most to the glory of God."

O this mysterious, awful shadow, this veil which hides the great eternal hereafter; how we long to get one glimpse beyond it! How imagination, conjecture, inquiry, seek to pierce the dark frontier which divides the stupendous realities of the future state from our present earthly condition! And these human affections of ours, how ardently they desire to know that departed friends, whose memories we cherish so fondly, do actually feel for us a kind and heightened interest even amidst the amazing scenes of the world of spirits! There is good ground for the confident assurance that they do. "I sometimes wonder," said a profound thinker, John Foster, "that religious teachers advert so little in any distinct terms to the state immediately after death, which inspiration has so expressly asserted to be a state of consciousness, and of happiness to faithful souls."

Some of the incidents of travel on his return route, Dr. Capers thus describes: "I left Columbus, Mississippi, on New Year's day, encouraged, by the few days of fair weather of the previous week, to hope that I might reach Montgomery, by the way of Greensboro and Selma, by stage. But the rain was again upon us like a flood, and after travelling only twenty-three miles, the driver firmly told me I could go no farther. The river, of course, was my alternative; and to the river I went in

search of a boat. The evening of the 3d found me on the western shore of the Tombigbee, five miles from its junction with the Alabama, where I was in hope of a passage in the boat of that evening up the Alabama. I had been told of clever accommodations at my stopping-place; and what I found I will now relate as a specimen of Western hospitality. There was a comfortable dwelling, kitchen, etc.; but the proprietors had abandoned the place on account of its sickliness, and were living two or three miles back in the pine woods. An old negro man, left in charge of the buildings, was the only resident. His kitchen fire was warm; he talked of cooking something for my 'reberence,' which I declined; and I was returning his proffered kindness with a word about his soul, when a fine-looking man entered. He was the proprietor, who had been all day engaged in loading a boat somewhere in the neighborhood, and going home a little after night, was induced to stop by the sight of a traveller's trunk in a corner of his piazza. We were mutually unknown, and I only wanted a fire on the bank of the river, where I could await the arrival of the steamer. But no such thing. A fire *must* be made in the house, and he *would* make it. 'But, sir, you have been with your boat all day long, without any thing to eat; you had better go home.' 'That is nothing, compared to your being here without any supper. I'll make you a fire, and then I will go.' So the fire was made, and we chatted freely, interrupted, however, with frequent

expressions of regrets by mine host that I should find nothing to eat, and as frequent remonstrances on my part against his remaining so late from home, when he must be hungry, and Mrs. B. uneasy about him. It took me an hour to prevail on him to go. And my next care was to extinguish the fire, and remove my quarters to the bank of the river. Here I was, seated on my trunk over a blazing fire, at nine o'clock P M., when lo, my host was again upon me, and with him a lovely young woman, his wife. His supper had long been waiting for him, and as I could not be induced to go and share it with him, the good lady had resolved to bring a cup of coffee to the old preacher where he was. It was a moonlight night, though cloudy. Only a pleasant ride on horseback, she insisted. And again I was removed to the house. And now that troublesome trunk. It must not be left at the river, but taken to the house, and Mr. B. *must* carry it. I protested, and took hold on a strap; but he would have it to himself, fairly on his shoulder, without any partnership in the load. There we were then, again in the house, with the addition of an elegant woman to our company; (for such was Mrs. B., if I know what makes an elegant woman;) and we talked away as if each meant to find out every thing that concerned the other, right away. Presently the puffing noise of a steamer was heard, and seizing a torch, I ran for the river; Mrs. B. running step for step with me, and Mr. B. (fine fellow) bearing the trunk without

my knowledge of his doing so. The boat was racing, and would not stop to take me. And now it was eleven o'clock at night. Mrs. B. had left a sick child at home, and in all conscience I thought she must have had enough of the old parson. Would she not go home? Did she mean to sit there all night? 'Madam,' said I, 'you say this is not your house because you cannot accommodate me in it: suppose then you allow me to take possession. Have you any objection, Mr. B.?' 'No, no,' she exclaimed, anticipating him, 'he has no objection. It is your house, and we are only your visitors.' 'Very well,' I replied: 'then let me tell you, madam, that it is past eleven o'clock; you are three miles from home; you have a sick child; and it is time for you to make your election between going home and going to bed, if you can find bed and bedclothes about my house.' At about midnight they went home; and some hours after I got aboard a steamboat, never more deeply impressed with Western hospitality. Mr. B. was a graduate of the University of Alabama, and Mrs. B. had been educated at Georgetown, D. C.

"Did you ever get aboard one of their double-engine steamboats, by a yawl, on a dark night? If not, be reminded to take care when you do. The moon was down before the Southerner answered my waving torchlight, and sent her yawl to fetch me aboard. I had before noticed the quickness of their movements on like occasions on those waters, and as the men were pulling for the boat,

I begged them to take care of me in getting aboard, and not be too quick to sing out '*ready;*' 'for I am no longer active, my good fellows,' said I, 'and will need more time than a younger man might.' 'You shall have your time, sir,' answered one of them, 'and I will see you all safe.' And he was as good as his word, or that had been my last adventure.

"There are two engines employed to propel those boats, and they are placed on the main deck, next to the wheels. The boats have two stories or decks, like long, two-storied, flat-roofed houses, built on their decks, as wide as their hulls. The lower of these stories is used for carrying freight, and in the present case the freight was cotton; while the upper story forms the habitable part of the boat. The freight, cotton bales, was separated from the engines by an open framework, and filled the entire space between them, and to the ceiling, except sixteen or eighteen inches along one side, next to the enclosure of the starboard engine. I had never observed where the engines were placed on board these boats, or how the boatmen passed from place to place on that lower deck; but, taking it for granted all was plain and easy, having gained the deck from the yawl at the stern of the boat, I was making my way before the man with my trunk to the steps forward of the wheelhouse, when the engineer let off steam, and filled the whole place with a mist so thick that I could not see. It was just at the moment the man at the yawl cried out, 'All

ready,' and precisely as I had reached the point of the squeezing passage between the cotton bales and the engine. The passage I could not see; but the engine being yet at rest, with the huge beam they call the pitman lying horizontally just at my feet, I took that for the way, and was actually stepping on it, when the man behind seized and drew me back. The pilot's bell had already jingled, and the engineer's answered to it, so that a few seconds more showed me the pitman I was going to walk on, lifted to the ceiling as a great arm turning the wheels of the boat. How nigh had been death, and how unsuspected!"

While Dr. Capers was Missionary Secretary, the following incident occurred in Charleston, which deeply affected him: There was living in Anson street a saintly old colored woman, named Rachel Wells. She had been a member of the Methodist Church for many years, and been a pattern of piety in humble life. Her patience and faith, her good works and consistent example, had been long known to Dr. Capers, who held her in high regard. Some years previously, while in charge of the Charleston Station, he had occasion to visit Aunt Rachel, and gave the following account of the interview: "She had fallen down the step-ladder which served for stairs, and struck an eye with so much force as almost to put it out, inflicting excruciating pain, and endangering her life by inflammation. It was at a time when our worthiest and ablest ministers happened to be in the city,

waiting for a passage by ship to New York, on their way to a General Conference, and we had service in Trinity Church every evening, greatly to our refreshment. 'Sorry to see you in so sad a case, Maum Rachel,' said I, as I approached her little chamber, from which almost every ray of light had been excluded on account of the painfulness of her eye. 'Sorry I am, very sorry for you; and the more, that this bad accident should have happened just now, when we are having such good meetings every night in Trinity. You would be so happy if you could be with us there.'

"'I hear of de meetin, sir,' she answered, 'and t'ank God for 'em for you sake; but as for me, I hab no need o' dem. I couldn't do widout Trinity Church before, and while I well I neber off my seat da, day or night; but since dis ting come 'pon me you call bad accident, I hab no need of Trinity Church any more; t'ank God, my blessed Jesus hab shorter way to me now dan by Trinity Church. All he do for me wid de meetin befo-time, he do for me now widout de meetin; and more too, bless de Lord.'"

On the occasion before referred to, Dr. Capers went to see Aunt Rachel. Part of the conversation was in the following words: "Alluding to her seeming solitude, she said: 'Time was when I had some 'bout me, but God please to tek dem from me. But I quite resign. When de las one gone, I feel my heart begin to sick an fret. But I tink, what dis? If I fret, who I fret 'gainst? My

chil'en gon, but my *frien'* tek 'em. I can't fret 'gainst *my frien'* Den I lif up my heart and say, Well, Lord, you got 'em *all* now; you aint lef me one. Now den *you* come stay wid me, and I no care. I tek you now in place o' all dem you tek from me. So he come to me closer dan eber, an I neber want for anybody else.'

"She gave me a pretty thought of the perpetuity of Christian zeal beyond the present state. Speaking of our late lamented Kennedy, she said:

"'Well, Mr. Kennedy he keep go and neber stop till he drop down in de Master work. So you must do too. All de dear minister what used to work wid him must do so too. Mr. Kennedy gone, but dat spirit Mr. Kennedy had he carry wid him. And you tink Mr. Kennedy do notin' in heaven? He no stan still for God here, he no stan still dere. He ministerin' spirit. He fly like de angel *to help de work on.*'

"Taking leave of her, she slipped a half-dollar into my hand. 'The poor have the gospel preached unto them, and the poor are the principal supporters of the gospel,' said I, as I perceived the piece she had deposited with me.

"'I take this the more thankfully for the missions, because, in these hard times, it is very seldom I have money put into my hand unasked, even for so good a cause; and may God repay you manifold in this present life.'

"'Dat, sir, if you please, you tek for a token o'

de lub I hab for you for Christ sake. T'ank God, I hab dis oder one for de missionary—all for Christ.'

"I felt exceedingly humble," added the Doctor. "The missions were worthy Maum Rachel's half-dollar, I knew; I felt that I was not."

Let no one say that Christianity, before the sublime truths of which an archangel might well stand uncovered, is not at the same time adapted to the intellectual capacity of the lowliest of the children of earth. Could a synod of divines have set forth more strikingly the true doctrine in regard to "the means of grace" than Maum Rachel did? They were necessary for her in ordinary circumstances, but providentially precluded from them, the blessed Jesus had a shorter way to her than by Trinity Church! What a depth of divine philosophy is unfolded in the thought, so clearly conceived, though uttered in broken English!

And where can we find the evangelical ground for resignation under the loss of friends and children more touchingly presented to view than in the sublime idea that a Divine *friend* has removed them, and loyalty to that friend demands unquestioning submission to behests that must be kind as well as wise? And then humble love comes closer to that Divine friend, and takes *him* in the place of all who had been taken away, and finds more than all in the more intimate fellowship of the spirit with him.

It might be supposed that in the mind of an illiterate African woman, any notion of the employments of the heavenly world must of necessity be very crude and material—rest from labor, abodes of indolent pleasure, the antithesis in its glittering types of sensuous enjoyment to the stern conditions of the earthly lot. Not a word of it in the instance of Rachel Wells. There is more than Miltonic grandeur in the thought that the faithful minister of Christ carries with him into the eternal state the spirit which prompted and sustained a life of laborious zeal for Christ. That spirit never faltered here; its wing of active exertion never drooped; a subordinate agent in the plans of the Divine economy, it never stood still for God on earth. Trained into habitual vigor by the preparatory discipline of the present life, that same spirit will not stand still in the celestial world. A ministry of benevolent enterprise, embodying modes of action, sentiment, affection, that have been trained on earth, measures out the successive stages of its jubilant ascent on the path of eternal life. We may clothe the thought in the starry robes of gorgeous language; or we may look at it in the severe simplicity of the most homely words, it is very much the same. It is a thought that we do not find in all the imperial range of Greek and Roman and Oriental learning—nowhere outside of the Book of God.

The reader is sufficiently interested, we trust, in Rachel Wells, to allow us to add a word or two

more. She was at the time of her death, August, 1849, the oldest member of the Charleston Methodist church, white or colored. She was the first colored person who joined the society, at the time when the first religious meetings were held at the house of her master, Mr. Edgar Wells. She saw the foundation laid of the first Cumberland Street Church—a year or two after the close of the war of the Revolution. She outlived two generations of Methodists, a beautiful example of the power of religion to make a servant upright and happy. A short time before her death, we had the pleasure of an interview with her. She conversed just as one likes to hear an aged disciple talk. Her thoughts seemed equally divided between the past and the future. She told us the story of the first planting of Methodism in Charleston; and dwelt with affectionate reverence upon the memory of her master, who was instrumental in bringing her to God. The anticipation of meeting him and the various members of the family, in heaven, gave transport to her heart. But after indulging for some moments anticipations that rested on human relationships, she added, that all this was nothing in comparison to the joy she felt in the prospect of meeting that Saviour who died for her, whose likeness God's word assured her she should for ever bear. This love of Christ was to her, as it has been to millions, *the antidote to death.* Kindled in her heart at her conversion to God in early life, it had been the guiding light, the protecting glory

of a religious profession extending through *seventy* years, and, with a ray serene as the morning star, it shone upon the last hour of mortal life, then brightened into immortality.

CHAPTER XIII.

General Conference at New York—Debate on Finley's resolution—Incipient measures for a division of the Church.

NEAR the close of April, 1844, Dr. Capers left Charleston to attend the General Conference, held at New York, as one of the delegates from the South Carolina Conference. His home during the session was at the residence of Mr. Fletcher Harper, where he found his friends Olin and Durbin. The anti-slavery fanaticism of the Eastern and Northern portion of the Methodist Episcopal Church, reached a crisis at this General Conference, and it turned out to be the last at which delegates from the Southern and Northern Conferences met in one assembly.

At the close of the first week the appeal of the Rev. F Harding, of the Baltimore Conference, was taken up. On the 11th May, it was decided, on a motion to reverse the decision of the Baltimore Conference, by fifty-six ayes to one hundred and seventeen nays. "I confess," said Dr. Capers, "that both in the action of the Baltimore Conference in the case of Harding, and the action of the General Conference on his appeal, in which the de-

cision of the Baltimore Conference was affirmed, a fancied purity from the defilement 'of the great evil of slavery,' appeared a Moloch at whose altar humanity, justice, equity, seemed to be sacrificed."

This case was invested with higher interest, as it showed the strength of the two parties in reference to a more important case, that of Bishop Andrew, who, it was found, had become "connected with slavery." The Bishop, ascertaining that a strong excitement was growing up against him on this account, had solicited an interview with the delegates of the Southern Conferences, and proposed, if they wished it, to resign his office for the sake of peace. They unhesitatingly declined any assent to such a proposal; but, on the contrary, assured the Bishop that he could not procure peace by such a sacrifice; that his resignation would imply submission to an unjust and injurious censorship, and would involve an utter abandonment of Southern interests.

On the 14th May, Dr. Capers introduced in the General Conference the following resolution: "In view of the distracting agitation which has so long prevailed on the subject of slavery and abolition, and especially the difficulties under which we labor in the present General Conference, on account of the relative position of brethren North and South on this perplexing question; therefore,

Resolved, That a committee of three from the North, and three from the South, be appointed to confer with the Bishops, and report within two

days, as to the possibility of adopting some plan, and what, for the permanent pacification of the Church."

This proposition was received with general favor, and a committee was accordingly raised, with Dr. Capers as chairman. After several ineffectual attempts to lay down a basis of agreement satisfactory to both parties, the committee reported their failure, and were discharged from any further consideration of the subject. This failure satisfied all thoughtful minds that the dismemberment of the Church was an event inevitable. The knell of the Church-union was already sounded. The difficulty was unmanageable by human wisdom or power.

The first formal action in the case of Bishop Andrew was taken May 20th, at the instance of a member of the Baltimore delegation. On the 22d a resolution was introduced by another member of the same delegation, *affectionately* requesting the Bishop to resign his office. On the 23d, a substitute was offered by Mr. Finley, of Ohio, resolving that it was the sense of the General Conference that Bishop Andrew desist from the exercise of his office so long as the impediment of his connection with slavery should remain.

The broad ground on which the Northern members rested their plea was that of *expediency*. No attempt was made to show that the Bishop had violated any law of the Book of Discipline, or any pledge given at the time of his election to the

Episcopacy, that he would never become a slaveholder. But inasmuch as it was held impossible for him to exercise his functions in an Annual Conference where the anti-slavery spirit prevailed to a fanatical extent, while at the same time as a Bishop he was a *general* superintendent, it was maintained that he had disqualified himself for his office, and must desist from exercising it anywhere. To this the Southern members replied, that the expediency was wholly on one side of this question; that the measure, however expedient for the North, would be fearfully ruinous to the interests of the Church in the South. A distinct, strong, unanimous testimony was delivered on that point.

Dr. Winans, of the Mississippi Conference, made the first speech on the Southern side, Dr. Capers the last. Very able and impressive speeches were also made by Dr. W A. Smith, of Virginia, by the Pierces, father and son, and Dr. Longstreet, of Georgia, Mr. Stringfield, of Holston, Dr. A. L. P Green, of Tennessee, and others. Dr. Winans was an impetuous speaker, after the Greek model; very plain in attire and appearance, wearing no cravat, making no flourishes. But if any adversary supposed that this unpretending exterior indicated a mind of ordinary calibre, he very soon changed his opinion. Massive strength, put in motion by a glowing spirit, furnished a mighty momentum, which struck like the swell of the sea when stormy winds rule the waters. "Sir," he

said, "by the vote contemplated by this body, and solicited by this resolution, you will render it expedient—nay, more, you render it indispensable—nay, more, you render it *uncontrollably necessary* that a large portion of the Church—and permit me to add, a portion always conformed in their views and practices to the Discipline of the Church—I say that by this vote you render it indispensably, ay, uncontrollably necessary, that that portion of the Church should—I dread to pronounce the word, but you understand me. Yes, sir, you create an uncontrollable necessity that there should be a disconnection of that large portion of the Church from your body. It is not because there are prejudices waked up by unceasing agitation, year after year, in opposition to the spirit and language of the Discipline, but it arises out of the established laws of society—from a state of things under the control of political and civil government, which no minister of the gospel can control or influence in the smallest degree. If you press this action in the mildest form in which you approach the Bishop, you will throw every minister in the South *hors du combat;* you will cut us off from all connection with masters and servants; and will leave us no option—God is my witness that I speak with all sincerity of purpose toward you—but to be disconnected with your body. If such necessity exists on your part to drive this man from his office, we reässert that this must be the result of your action in this matter. We have no will, no choice in the thing. It

comes upon us as destiny; it comes with overwhelming force; and all we can do is to submit to it."

These passages were delivered with the true Demosthenean force. The irrepressible emotion, the "erect countenance," the flashing eye, and ringing voice, the unfaltering prediction of consequences that were to follow, and resound through all Methodist history, made the speech memorable.

Dr. Capers spoke at the close of the twelve days' debate. In many respects, he was the antithesis of Dr. Winans. Fine finish in face, dress, delivery; perfect command of voice and emotion; refinement of manner, and charm of grace and urbanity; keenness of intellect, and a firm hold on the respect and kind feelings of the whole assembly—all these combined elements gave him a favorable position, even at the close of a prolonged and exciting debate. From the posture of parties, there was no ground of hope left to any Southern member that the contemplated measures could be arrested. No vote could be changed by argument or persuasion. It was rather to the whole country—to posterity, that the appeal was felt to be made.

The first point Dr. Capers made was in respect to the unity of the Church. His argument was in substance this: Bishop Andrew is under arrest as a slaveholder, because thereby he has made it impossible for himself to exercise in the non-slaveholding States his Episcopal functions. Very well. You maintain that a General Conference is

the supreme power in the Church, to which the Bishops are subordinate and responsible. How absurd is the clamor against a slaveholding Bishop, as a contamination upon a part of the Church, when the General Conference itself includes slaveholders, who thus, by the very unity of the Church, connect these immaculate Conferences inextricably with "the great evil!" "Yes, sir," he said, "they and I are brethren, whether they will or no. The same holy hands have been laid upon their heads and upon my head. The same vows which they have taken, I have taken. At the same altar where they minister, do I minister; and with the same words mutually on our tongues. We are the same ministry, of the same Church; not *like*, but *identical*. Are they Elders? So am I. Spell the word. There is not a letter in it which they dare deny me. Take their measure. I am just as high as they are, and they are as low as I am. We are not one ministry for the North, and another ministry for the South; but one and one only, for the whole Church."

It could not have made his argument more conclusive or irresistible, had he added, that by virtue of this same unity and connectionalism of the Church, he, a slaveholder, had himself been called on by Northern as well as Southern votes to represent the entire American Methodist Church, a few years previously, before the British Wesleyan Conference. Had the lapse of these few years altered the immutable law of Christian morals,

and made that to be wrong to-day which was perfectly right then?

After a brief examination of the new doctrine which had been improvised to cover the approaching action, that, namely, which held Bishops to be merely officers of the General Conference, liable to be set aside as class-leaders, at the mere pleasure of a majority, and showing what a solemn farce the consecration service would become on such a supposition, Dr. Capers went on to exhibit the *unconstitutionality* of the contemplated proceeding. He maintained that whatever else the Constitution of the Church might be, it must first be Christian, and secondly, Protestant, and thirdly, consistent with the great object for which the Methodist Church was raised up, to spread scriptural holiness over these lands. In elaborating this last point, he showed how the proceedings against the Bishop must impede the course of the ministry in many of the States, and debar access altogether to large portions of the colored population. He was now approaching a point of view where, from the very office he had held under the General Conference for the last four years—that of Missionary Secretary for the South—he was entitled to speak with the highest authority. If any man in America could be supposed to be well informed on this subject, Dr. Capers was that man. And what was his testimony? "Never, never," said he, "have I suffered, as in view of the evil which this measure threatens against the South. The agitation has

begun there; and I tell you that though our hearts were to be torn from our bodies, it could avail nothing when once you have awakened the feeling that we cannot be trusted among the slaves. *Once you have done this, you have effectually destroyed us.* I could wish to die sooner than live to see such a day. As sure as you live, there are tens of thousands, nay, hundreds of thousands, whose destiny may be perilled by your decision on this case. When we tell you that we preach to a hundred thousand slaves in our missionary field, we only announce the beginning of our work—the beginning openings of the door of access to the most numerous masses of slaves in the South. When we add that there are two hundred thousand now within our reach who have no gospel unless we give it to them, it is still but the same announcement of the beginnings of the opening of that wide and effectual door, which was so long closed, and so lately has begun to be opened, for the preaching of the gospel by our ministry, to a numerous and destitute portion of the people. O close not this door! Shut us not out from this great work, to which we have been so signally called of God."

In this strain he went on to the conclusion of his speech. Had it been within the possibility of human agency to close or bridge the gulf of separation which yawned between the Northern and Southern sections of the Church, this fervid, telling, and powerful appeal to the Christian principles and emotions of the majority, must have

done it. Were they not the very men, by eminence, who were clamoring about the civil and social condition of the negro population of the Southern States? But were they not, also, the very preachers whose business it was to ask the question, "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Was it possible that these men cared nothing for the souls of the negroes? Swallowed up, as some of them no doubt were, in the abstractions of a fanaticism which was blind to all spiritual and eternal interests; and hardened as some of them possibly were by the hypocritical cant of abolitionism, there was yet enough of sound Christianity among the majority of that General Conference, to *feel* the force of those considerations—irresistible to a good man—which in so touching a style this speech had set before them. Why, then, did they carry out the measure objected to on such weighty considerations? The answer is, that all considerate men among them saw that the time had come for a separation. They meant to meet the emergency with a steady determination to do justice to the claims of that portion of the Church represented by the minority. Subsequent acts show that they are entitled to the justification found alone in such a determination.

Dr. Few, of Georgia, whose want of health had deprived the South of his important services as a delegate, upon reading Dr. Capers's speech, made

the following remark: "I would be willing to risk the whole cause upon that speech alone, with every sound-minded, unprejudiced man, although he should be required to read all that was said on the opposite side."

This speech was made on Thursday, May 30th. The Bishops requested that no afternoon session should be held, in order that they might have time for a consultation, in the hope that a compromise might yet be effected. On the next day the result of this consultation was presented in a communication recommending a postponement of further action in Bishop Andrew's case until the ensuing General Conference. This forlorn-hope proposition came to nothing; and on the day following, June 1st, the vote was taken, and Mr. Finley's resolution was adopted—one hundred and eleven members voting in the affirmative, and sixty-nine in the negative.

Dr. L. Pierce then rose and gave notice that a protest would be presented against the action of the majority, by the Southern delegations. This masterly paper was drawn up and read by Dr. Bascom. On Monday, June 3, Dr. Capers introduced a series of resolutions recommending the Annual Conferences to suspend the constitutional restrictions, so as to allow the existence of two General Conferences, one for the States North, and one for the States in which slavery exists. These were referred to a committee of nine, who reported

on the 5th that they could not agree upon any thing which they judged would be acceptable to the Conference.

Dr. Longstreet then, in behalf of the Southern and South-western Conferences, presented the following declaration: "The delegates of the Conferences in the slaveholding States take leave to declare to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, that the continued agitation of the subject of slavery and abolition in a portion of the Church, the frequent action on that subject in the General Conference, and especially the extra-judicial proceedings against Bishop Andrew, which resulted, on Saturday last, in the virtual suspension of him from his office as Superintendent, must produce a state of things in the South which renders a continuance of the jurisdiction of that General Conference over these Conferences inconsistent with the success of the ministry in the slaveholding States."

This declaration was then referred to a committee of nine, Dr. Paine, of Tennessee, being chairman. They were instructed by a formal resolution to devise, if possible, a constitutional plan for a mutual and friendly division of the Church, provided they could not devise a plan for an amicable adjustment of the difficulties existing on the subject of slavery.

The next day Dr. Paine brought in a Plan of Separation, which allowed the Annual Conferences in the slaveholding States to unite in a distinct ecclesiastical connection, should they find it

necessary; and which fixed the territorial limits of the Churches North and South; allowed ministers of every grade to determine their ecclesiastical connection; gave up to the Southern organization all rights of property in meeting-houses, parsonages, colleges, schools, Conference funds, cemeteries, and the like; and provided for the fair division of the Book Concern as soon as the Annual Conferences should remove the restriction on the powers of the General Conference to do so. This plan evidently made the Southern Conferences judges of the necessity of division, and referred but a single point—that of the *pro rata* division of the Book Concern—to the whole body of Annual Conferences. The unanimity with which this great scheme of separation was voted by the General Conference, was alike honorable to the judgments and hearts of the majority. There is no doubt that, under the provisions of this plan of separation, the Southern organization would have been amicably carried through, and the Book Concern fund divided without an appeal to legal tribunals, had the official journal of the Northern Church adopted a pacific and conciliatory policy. Unfortunately, this organ, so powerful for moulding public opinion, was in the hands of a person wholly unsuited to the emergency. To great and acknowledged ability, there was united in his character an overweening sense of self-importance. *He* was the Palinurus who could steer the ship through storm and shoal. He would maintain the unity

and integrity of the Church, all the Hotspurs of the South to the contrary notwithstanding. The paper conducted by him circulated extensively in the South: *he* would make its influence there more powerful to control opinion than the united influence of the representatives of the Southern Conferences; more powerful than the sense of injury among a high-spirited people, impatient of foreign interference and dictation in their domestic concerns. It is needless to add that a signal failure followed all these vain conceits. The only success accomplished was a defeat of the measure proposed in respect to a division of the Book Concern. And, notwithstanding the vigorous attempts of this press to fix the odium of secession upon the Southern Church, which would invalidate their just claim to a portion of the common fund, the Northern Conferences, by an affirmative vote of one thousand one hundred and sixty-four against one thousand and sixty-seven in the negative, expressed their sense of the righteousness of the Southern claim. There lacked but two hundred and sixty-nine votes to make up the constitutional majority of two-thirds requisite to alter the restrictive rule. The courts of law subsequently, as it is well known, gave the Southern Church what was due to it. The opinion was expressed by one of the eminent legal gentlemen who managed the case for the Southern Commissioners, that whatever took place afterward, *through mischiefs growing out of the press*, the General Conference, when it agreed to the

division, did it harmoniously, kindly, and in the expectation of a kind communion afterward. And mischief, and nothing but mischief, grew out of the unhappy course of the press aforementioned. It reminds one of the fisherman in the Arabian story, whose persevering industry first fished up a basket of slime, and then the carcass of an ass, and finally dragged out a malevolent genie, that was potent enough for harm.

Dr. Capers was appointed, at the ensuing session of the South Carolina Conference, Superintendent of the missions to the blacks in Georgia, Alabama, and South Carolina; and elected a delegate to the Convention held at Louisville, Kentucky, at which the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, was organized. As Chairman of the Committee on Missions, he drew up a circular letter, to be sent by the Convention to all the churches of the new Connection, forcibly presenting the claims of that important department under the new aspects which had opened upon Southern Methodism. He also wrote the Pastoral Address—a paper admirable in its tone, and equal to the occasion, yet inculcating the purest spirit of peace and love, and breathing the warmest attachment to the doctrines and discipline, the economy and usages of primitive American Methodism.

CHAPTER XIV.

Elected and ordained Bishop—First tour of Episcopal visitations—Travels through the border territory of the Virginia Conference.

At the close of the year 1845 Dr. Capers was stationed at Columbia. Here, at the request of the South Carolina Conference, he revised the catechism for the use of the negro missions which he had prepared some years previously, adding a second part, comprehending a brief outline of the history of redemption. This was submitted to the Committee on Missions at the General Conference at Petersburg, and adopted by the Conference, and ordered to be introduced into the missions generally.

In the spring of 1846 he attended the session of the first General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. On the 7th of May, he and Dr. R. Paine were elected Bishops. On the 14th they were consecrated to their high and holy office. At 12 o'clock the interesting solemnity took place, at the Washington Street Church. Bishop Andrew opened the service by singing the 463d hymn, commencing,

"Saviour of men, thy searching eye
Doth all my inmost thoughts descry:
Doth aught on earth my wishes raise,
Or the world's pleasure, or its praise?

"The love of Christ doth me constrain
To seek the wandering souls of men;
With cries, entreaties, tears, to save,
To snatch them from the gaping grave."

After extemporaneous prayer, the Bishops-elect were presented, Dr. Capers by Dr. Pierce, and Dr. Paine by Mr. Early. The Collect, Epistle, and Gospel were read by Bishop Andrew; the questions to the Bishops-elect were proposed by Bishop Soule, who, together with Bishop Andrew and the elders presenting, laid their hands upon the heads of the Bishops-elect, with the consecrating formula. The Bible was then delivered to them with the accompanying charge. The benediction, preceded by suitable prayers, closed the solemn service.

The following letter written to Mrs. Capers on the occasion will be read with interest: "I left you for the General Conference not knowing what was before me. None of the brethren in our quarter had spoken to me, none from a distance had written to me, about my being put into the Episcopacy; and after I came here, up to the hour of the election, the subject was scarcely named except in the most incidental manner. I thought not of being made Bishop. The result took me by surprise. And I am glad that it was so sudden, for the very suddenness of it made it more effectual to rouse me to (what I trust humbly in God's mercy may prove) the final conflict. All or nothing, now and for life, come what may, to me and mine, seemed to be the question involved; and

thank God, I felt that however low my spirit had been depressed in past conflicts, struggling with adversity, I was still Christian enough, and Christian minister enough, to decide without hesitancy. Indeed, you know that in all the past, the bitterness of the cup has never been so much the amount of difficulties I have had to contend with, as that cruel, insupportable insinuation that those difficulties were on account of the Lord's controversy with me for having once yielded to temptation and left the work. I felt that the favor of God and the confidence of the Church was our best estate, and best patrimony for our children; and whether or not, I dare not, I would not draw back. To-day I feel that we all are on the altar together; and O, have I not felt that 'the altar sanctifieth the gift?' I have only to cast all my care on God, all my multiform unworthiness on his Divine goodness and condescension in Christ, and go on. I have so reverenced the work and office of a Bishop and the Bishops themselves, that that itself embarrasses me. I cannot feel myself a Bishop; but, thank God, I feel what is better—an abiding sense of being accepted of him, in an humble and sincere devotion of myself, without stint, to his service."

It was highly honorable to Dr. Capers that he should have been elected in the manner just related. His high character, his known devotion to the itinerant ministry, and his past services, rendered unnecessary the slightest effort on the part of his friends to secure his election. It is no wonder,

indeed, that the thing should have taken him by surprise, for his unaffected humility led him to consider many of his brethren more suitable for the office than himself. Such a self-estimate, among all right-minded men, is the unfailing concomitant of that class of abilities required for the peculiarly difficult and delicate functions of a Methodist Bishop. What minister of Christ, properly aware of the responsibilities attached to the Episcopal office in the Methodist Church, and especially if surrounded by the endearments of the family circle, would not unhesitatingly say, *nolo episcopari*, if the matter were left to his own choice? Bishop Paine was called, by the plan of visitation adopted at the time he was made Bishop, to a seven months' absence from home, one brief visit excepted. Surely no honor attached to the office, apart from the constraint of imperative duty, could be an equivalent for self-sacrifice of this kind.

The plan of Episcopal visitations assigned to Bishop Capers the Holston, Virginia, North Carolina, Georgia, South Carolina, and Florida Conferences, as his first tour. These visitations occupied him from October to February. The Holston Conference was held at Wytheville, Va. Leaving home late in September, he passed through Asheville, down the French Broad, and attended a camp-meeting at Parrottsville, Tenn. "The meeting," he says, "was a good one, the number of conversions above forty, and of persons joining the Church, fifty. The French Broad has been

celebrated for its scenery by all who have travelled along its rocky shores; but I esteem the scenery which now and then opens to the traveller along the road I have travelled since I left the French Broad, much more delightful. On the French Broad, every thing is bold and rugged, but you are always shut in to a scene of the same general features, without any extensive view—the water hurrying along down its rocky bed at your feet, and the high hills closely shutting up the prospect. But there are spots, coming from Parrottsville to Col. Earnest's, beyond Greensville, where I now am, at which you see on the right hand, south-eastwardly, eastwardly, and north-eastwardly, ranges of mountains lying at all distances, from five to thirty miles; while on the left hand an immense valley of meadow-lands and hills, along the Nollichucky river, opens as far as you can see, with mountains at great distances diversifying the scene with exquisite pictures of the bosom of nature. There is no country in America so fine as this for its natural scenery; and the lands are very rich. Nor have you to climb to the tops of mountains to enjoy the prospects I have alluded to. All the country between different ranges of mountains is called a valley, though it may be as uneven as Newton county, Ga.; and along any line of road passing through a valley you will be almost always in view of some mountain-range, and frequently of several ranges at various distances. Three nights ago, I stayed with George Wells, and the next day

met with Stephen Brooks, of the first generation of Methodist preachers. Brooks began travelling in 1789, and Wells a year or two after. At the house of old brother Wells I was at one of the resting-places of Bishop Asbury, and one at which he stopped in the tour when I first met with him, after I had commenced the work of the itinerant ministry."

On this route, Bishop Capers visited Emory and Henry College, and was so much pleased that he wrote a highly complimentary notice of the institution for the columns of the Southern Christian Advocate. Thence he went to Abingdon, and reached Wytheville, the seat of the Holston Conference, almost oppressed with the kind and constant attentions shown him. After the session of the Conference he spent a day or two with Mrs. Preston, the daughter of Major Hart, an old Columbia friend.

From Wytheville he crossed the mountains and went to Mecklenburg county, where the Virginia Conference was held, at Randolph Macon College. Of these two Conferences he says: "I have been much blessed in my official labors, and am bound more than ever to devote myself to them. During the Conferences, both at Wytheville and Randolph Macon, I have enjoyed uncommon serenity and elevation of mind. God has blessed me with the light of his countenance, and the preachers have treated me with the most affectionate kindness."

After attending the North Carolina Conference

at Newbern, he reached home about the middle of December, and spent a day or two with his family. The Georgia Conference convened at Macon, December 23d; the session was a very pleasant one under the presidency of Bishop Capers. After holding the South Carolina Conference at Charleston, he left early in February for Quincy, the seat of the Florida Conference. On his way he spent several days at the house of his old and honored friend, Mr. Charles Munnerlyn, where he was kindly cared for after a very fatiguing journey. This was made in a leaky, half-curtained hack, inflicting on him extreme exposure in bad weather, and bringing on in a short time great stricture of the respiratory organs, and inflammation of the bronchia. He suffered at times extremely from this attack, for two years, when in the spring of 1849, by God's gracious providence, and without the least instrumentality of human means, he was relieved of it.

After a pleasant and profitable session of the Florida Conference, he spent a Sunday in Tallahassee, and another in Madison, Florida, being accompanied by the Rev. Mr. Michau, who had tendered the Bishop a seat in his buggy. He reached Charleston about the middle of March, having spent nearly seven months in this first round of Episcopal visitations. His family were shortly after removed to a commodious residence in the upper part of the city, which had been put at his service by the kindness of his friends.

The Virginia Conference lay within Bishop Capers's district during the year 1847 Excitement was running high in the "border" circuits, and it was thought desirable that he should travel through them. A special invitation having been sent him, he set out on a visit to that part of Virginia on the 18th May. The following diary gives an account of his movements:

"At Wilmington, May 19, several brethren were waiting my arrival at the wharf. It was arranged that I should stay with brother Thomas Smith. Preached at night; some forty mourners at the altar, and several conversions. Prayer-meeting next morning. After preaching at night, a still greater number at the altar than the night before, and several converted. Got to Richmond early Saturday morning, May 22. Preached twice on Sunday. Attended the Sunday-school celebration of the Centenary and Clay street Sunday-schools on Monday. Left Richmond by the railroad to Gordonsville. 26th, preached at night. Thursday, carried over roads rough enough, fourteen miles to Col. J Walker's; dined and was sent in his carriage to Madison Court-house. Preached at night. Friday, at 2 o'clock, got on a smooth-walking pony, for the enterprise of over the mountain on horseback. Nine miles got me to brother B. Conway's, where dismissed the pony, and got Kate, a pleasant, never-tiring nag. Rode on nine miles farther, over hills and little mountains, to brother S. Kennedy's. Saturday morning, set out early,

(rocks, rocks,) and went over the Blue Ridge, by Swift-Run gap, to the Quarterly Meeting at Elk Run, fifteen or sixteen miles, and right to preaching. Less tired after the preaching than before. Preaching and sacrament on Sunday. Monday, 31st, to Harrisonburg, twenty miles, and preached at night. Again at 11 A. M., and at night Tuesday. On Wednesday rode Kate Conway to my friend Jennings's, at Elk Run, twenty miles, to dinner; and after dinner, over the Blue Ridge, and one or two spurs of mountains on the eastern side, to brother McMullan's. He computes the distance from Harrisonburg at thirty-eight miles—mind that—thirty-eight miles on horseback, crossing the Blue Ridge, and a mountain cliff besides, and the miles none of the shortest. Thursday, June 3d, nine miles to Wolftown, *alias*, Trinity Church, and preached. A piece of cold ham and bread after preaching, and then off fifteen miles to Col. James Walker's, to preach at 5 o'clock P M. Friday, left Col. Walker's at 7½ A. M. Got to Culpepper Court-house to dinner, and after dinner on to the White Sulphur Springs. I feel as comfortably as I could wish; thanks to the best riding nag I ever rode; thanks to the mountain air; thanks to the ever-varied scenery of mountain and meadows, and wide-spreading prospects over hills and dales, covered with wheat fields and clover; thanks to the sweet-singing birds; and, above all, thanks to Him who is in all, and over all, and above all. Kate Conway and the saddlebags in preference to rail-

roads, steamboats, or stages, for a Bishop at his work.

"Preached twice on Sabbath at Warrenton, Fauquier county. On Monday rode some thirteen miles to a small town called Salem, and preached, and afterwards rode as much farther to the residence of Dr. Taliaferro, just under the Blue Ridge. Tuesday: preached at Farrowsville, two miles this side of the Doctor's; dined with a fine lady, Mrs. Ashby, with a large company; and after dinner rode on to sister Carter's, below Salem. Nine miles on Wednesday morning brought me to Bethel, where, after preaching, I dined with an excellent brother named Blackwell. Here, too, we had some twenty people to dinner; and after they had dined and seen the Bishop, I rode to Warrenton, where I had an appointment, and preached at night. The congregations at every place have been large. The whole of this circuit adhered South last year, and its present preachers were sent from the Virginia Conference. No wonder that the Baltimore preachers feel sore. To lose such a country, and such a people! and with the aggravation of knowing that the loss is to be continually increasing, till all this fine portion of the Old Dominion has adhered South. June 10th I left Warrenton with my amiable travelling companion, Dr. Buckner, for Fredericksburg, being still mounted on the incomparable Kate Conway. Passed the night at the residence of one of the best specimens of a saintly old Methodist lady, in one of the best specimens

of an old-time cottage-house, with a bower before it of all sorts of vines, and every thing in it as simple and sweet as purity itself might desire. June 11, reached Fredericksburg, which still belongs to the Baltimore Conference. Put up at Sanford's United States Hotel.

"The next morning, Saturday, left Fredericksburg at 6 o'clock, in the steamboat Planter. Farewell to my good Kate Conway. At 9 o'clock reached Port Conway, having first touched at Port Royal, where Dr. Penn, Presiding Elder of Richmond District, met me, with whom I travelled very cleverly in his two-horse barouche, over fine, smooth roads. Our first meeting was for that day and Sunday, and was continued Monday, at a church six miles north-east from Port Conway. This Port Conway is little more than a stopping-place where the boats take in wood; but it is notable for the fact that Mr. Madison was born there. The spot where the house stood in which he was born was pointed out to me in an oat-field, about two hundred yards from the landing-place, and quite near the road leading up from the landing-place. I say *the spot* and not the house was pointed out, for there was no vestige of the house remaining. It is remarkable that Washington, Madison, and Monroe were born in the same county—Westmoreland; though that county being afterwards divided, the new county, King George, took in the birthplace of Madison. Here, too, in Westmoreland lived Henry Lee, the great colonel of cavalry, to whom South

Carolina in particular was so much indebted in the Revolutionary war. Col. Lee's place was on the Potomac, and called Stratford Hall.

"Saturday, Sunday, and Monday I preached at the Union Church, King George county, mentioned above, and Sunday night went across the Rappahannock and preached in the clever little town of Port Royal, opposite to Port Conway Tuesday, preached at Oak Grove, eight miles east from Union. Wednesday, at Westmoreland Court-house. Thursday, at Bethel, ten miles east from the Court-house. Saturday and Sunday, attended a Quarterly Meeting at Henderson's Chapel. Monday, 21st, rode thirty miles, or more, to Rehoboth, in Lancaster county, and preached there on Tuesday, and on Wednesday at White Chapel, in the same county. Congregations have been very large at all my appointments, and the friends where I have stayed on my route kind and affectionate. There is no portion of Virginia, or of our whole territory, more interesting than this border territory: a fertile and beautiful country, and exceedingly well peopled."

Bishop Capers reached home early in July from this tour of vigorous and successful labors. His account of it reminds one of the palmiest days of Francis Asbury and John Wesley. Really, for a man at his time of life, troubled with asthma occasionally, this was severe work. But there never was any lack of the "go-ahead" principle in Dr. Capers. His friend, Dr. Olin, once said of him, that he could do more hard work than any man of

his acquaintance. Those who knew him best knew that he needed no spur. He was, consequently, a little exposed to over-action when abroad among strangers. He had reached a period when there was a considerable diminution of strength to "endure hardness," while at the same time there was no sensible decline of manly spirit. His motto was, "As much as in me is;" and he never knew when that much had been expended, while he still had spirit enough to go on.

CHAPTER XV.

Second tour of visitations—The far West—Travels through the Indian Territory, Arkansas, Texas.

Bishop Capers's second tour of Episcopal visitations embraced a period of nearly five months, and reached from the Missouri river to Texas, taking in the Indian Mission Conference. He left Charleston September 9th, and reached Wheeling on the 16th. The Ohio river was low, and he was compelled to take passage in a small steamer of light draught, into which more than a hundred passengers were crowded. A tedious and uncomfortable passage got him to Louisville, Kentucky, too late to take part in the annual meeting of the Bishops and Mission Committee. As cold weather came on, his health began to droop somewhat, and asthma showed itself. By low water he was compelled to take stage to St. Louis. This involved incessant travelling during three days and two nights entire; and he reached St. Louis on the 25th September. The fatigue was too much for him, and he found it advisable to lie up for a day or two, at the residence of his nephew, the Rev. Thomas H. Capers. On the 28th he set out in a light travelling wagon,

with his nephew and the Presiding Elder of the district, for Glasgow, the seat of the Missouri Conference, distant one hundred and seventy-five miles. He stood the drive, rough as it was occasionally, very well, and arrived in time to attend to the ordination services on Sunday. At this Conference five preachers were admitted into the travelling connection, and fifty-one stationed.

The Conference adjourned October 7th, and he preached at Boonsville, twenty miles below Glasgow, on the Missouri river, the next night. From this town, accompanied by Dr. Boyle and his nephew, he set out for the St. Louis Conference. They spent Sunday at Warsaw; and before leaving next morning, the Bishop bought a saddle, bridle, and other equipments for horseback travelling, at the close of the approaching Conference. On Tuesday afternoon, our travellers reached Ebenezer camp-ground, in Greene county, Missouri, where Bishop Capers opened the session of Conference next morning. Asthma had been troubling him; but the fine weather on those broad prairie lands was continually improving his health. He preached on Sunday to a great concourse of people, and ordained both the deacons and elders, being engaged two hours and a half in the whole service, and feeling no particular harm from his exertions. After a short and very agreeable session, the Conference adjourned on Monday night. The Bishop bought a horse—not quite a Kate Conway, however; sent his trunk back to St. Louis to be for-

warded to New Orleans; and once more in the saddle, felt almost young again. Brother Joplin, one of the preachers, was his travelling companion, to whose kind attentions he felt himself much indebted.

Leaving the camp-ground on Tuesday morning, he preached that night at Springfield to a crowded house, and passed the night in a luxurious mansion, with a family of well-bred people, in the Ozark Mountains. Thirty miles the next day brought him to his stopping-place—an open house, and not much of it. Another thirty miles made the journey of Thursday. During the morning the wind at south made the weather too warm for an overcoat: at four o'clock, P M., a sudden puff from the north-west changed the temperature to winter in an instant. There being rain the next day, and the weather very cold, our travellers did not start until afternoon, and failed to reach the town of Fayetteville on Sunday. On Monday, however, on getting into the town at eleven o'clock, the Bishop found that he had to stop and preach, a large congregation being in waiting. This led to a further detention for dinner; so that it was three o'clock P M. before he got again on the road. Comfortable quarters that night. The next day they were done with the Ozark Mountains. "It makes me stiff and sore," says the Bishop, "to make a day's ride on horseback; but the night refreshes me, and the morning finds me ready to renew my toil." Passed through Van Buren—a

town on the Arkansas river, five miles from the Indian line—on the 26th. Thence to Fort Coffee Mission Station, a beautiful situation, on a high hill, immediately over the river Arkansas, eight or ten miles west of the State of Arkansas. He had time to spend only a night here, and was struck with the supper-scene. "The custom is to have family prayer at supper. Supper on table, the boys, fifty in number, were all seated with their faces outward when we went in. I read a short lesson, sang a hymn with them, and prayed; after which grace was said, and supper dispatched."

From Fort Coffee, Bishop Capers set off the next morning under the escort of some half-dozen agreeable preachers, who were on the way to the seat of the Indian Mission Conference, one hundred and fifty miles distant. Hardships here and there—a supper not to be described—a breakfast which made some of the company leave the table, as though stricken with sea-sickness; farther on, a fine turkey cut up into bits, and boiled until all taste is lost, and the pieces served at table to be eaten with corn-bread; boiled pork, fresh from the knife, without salt—(evidently there are few M. Soyers to preside at the Indian *cuisine;*) and then, the condition of things here and there suggesting, on going to bed, the danger of getting up with the *itch!*—all this to the contrary, our good Bishop goes on, stage after stage, improving in health, and in the best spirits, until, arriving at Doaksville, the seat of the Conference, he finds excellent quarters at

the house of an Indian widow lady, where he sleeps on downy pillows, in a mahogany bedstead, surrounded by all the appliances of high civilization.

The Indian Mission Conference was composed of thirty-three preachers, thirteen of whom were Indians. Some of them had travelled five hundred miles to attend Conference. The Bishop thus describes the exercises of Sunday: "I consented, at the earnest desire of the brethren, to have the ordinations and to preach, at the camp-ground, two miles from Doaksville, for the greater accommodation of the Indian audience. The ground is an area of perhaps an acre and a half, enclosed with a rail fence. There is in the middle of the ground a well-built roof, some forty by sixty feet, on substantial posts, with a shed at the pulpit end, some twenty feet wide, for the negroes, and the usual altar-place before the pulpit—all as with us. There are eleven tents made of plank or slabs, and well covered, the rest of the space being probably occupied at camp-meetings with tents of a more movable kind. I suppose the congregation may have numbered one thousand, of whom about a hundred and fifty were blacks, and about fifty whites. Probably half of the whole, or more, understood English well enough to understand me. Opened the service with singing the 508th hymn, L. M.; and after prayer, read the 19th Psalm, and part of the 17th chapter of St. Luke; verse by verse, as I read, being put into Choctaw by brother Page. The

text was an old one with me, but perhaps seldom before so appropriate, Luke xvii. 7–10. Having finished the sermon, I instantly beckoned Page to my side, and addressed, by sentences, those Choctaws who had not understood my preaching. I told them that never having tried to preach through an interpreter, and having a great deal to say to the ministers and others, I had not ventured it on that occasion. But it pained my heart that I was not able to make myself understood to them. I loved them very much—prayed earnestly for them, and that God would make my brethren a great blessing to them—there was a world before us with one language only—no need of an interpreter there—I wanted them to meet me with Jesus in heaven—begged them to meet me in heaven, which was open by the one only Saviour for us all. The whole service was good, but this last part of it was so remarkably blessed that I almost regretted not having gone through the whole in that way. I felt intensely myself—Page could hardly interpret for emotion—a venerable old Indian, Toby Chubbee, shouted aloud, and the whole face of the congregation looked as if a new life had animated them. Indeed, I thought it strange that during the whole service, which lasted the usual time, the hundreds present who could not understand me, remained not only fixed to their seats, but seeming to give close attention to all I said. May God be pleased to raise fruit from it! After the whole service was concluded, and the ordination over, I went to the

rear of the largest tent, where Mrs. Folsom, my interesting hostess, had had a table spread, some thirty feet long, with abundance of provisions of her usual good quality — turkey, bacon, corned pork, roast pork, etc., etc., *all right Christianly cold;* and having eaten heartily, came home that I might rest—needing rest."

His next Conference was held at Washington, Ark., from November 17th to 23d. There were forty-three travelling preachers stationed, and four admitted on trial. During the session he was quartered with General R——, where he was most hospitably entertained in a family of wealth and elegance. "Let me introduce you," he says, "to our table. We take the supper last evening as a specimen.

"Gen. R.: 'Bishop, try some of this lobster.'

"'Thank you, General, if you will not take it to be an encouragement of any extravagance. But really, after clams from New Orleans, last evening, have we now lobster from Boston, to our supper?'

"Gen. R., with affected gravity: 'Ah, sir, if you only knew how dreadful those curtain-lectures are, you would understand it.'

"'Mrs. R., I protest the General reflects on my understanding by that remark. I am too old a husband, and have been too often from home, not to know better what induces such purchases.'

"Mrs. R., smiling with a blush: 'He need not apologize for bringing me a lobster, when luxuriating in all the good things they have at New

Orleans. It would be hard if he did not even think of me.'

"Bishop: 'Yes, General, I'll take the lobster to encourage *that* quality in you.'

"The General, helping me: 'That is the way you do it in Carolina, where wives are governed by their husbands; but here in Arkansas, we just do as our wives tell us.'

"'And Mrs. R. told you to buy the lobster, did she?'

"'No, not just that; but I have to try and please her, that's all;' and a hearty laugh ended the case of the lobster."

The Bishop describes his hostess as one of the loveliest women he had ever been in company with. He was a fine judge of female character; and possessed the genius, the sense of the beautiful, and the goodness of heart, which are necessary to a proper appreciation of that somewhat mysterious thing—woman-nature. "I really felt sorry," he says, "to bid this kind family farewell. Not that I care a fig to part with their luxurious table, but themselves. Kind old Mrs. E., Mrs. R.'s mother, *would* have me to take a pair of large woollen socks, to draw over my shoes and ankles; while R., generous fellow, would examine every thing about my horse-equipage, and condemned my saddle as not being of the right Spanish shape, and of consequence not so easy as it ought to be; and whether I would or no, he put *his* saddle on my horse, in place of mine, as the only one fit to ride. I shall

take it home with me if I can get it there. The tree of the saddle alone cost and is worth ten dollars."

During the session, Bishop Capers preached on Sunday morning, on Matt. xviii. 1–4; and found still, as he says, "a considerably new sermon in an old text. Enlarged especially on the unreserved devotion to Christ, which the Christian ministry demands; the sinfulness of all selfishness; the wickedness and danger of all pride; and the indispensable necessity of holiness, that the minister of Christ, whatever his labors or character may be, might be accepted, successful, and saved. Afterwards ordained fourteen Deacons and five Elders. What a well of living water the Holy Scriptures are! The single text above contains truth enough, implied or expressed, to form a safe directory and guide on the way to heaven. And what a power for good comes forth with the word of Christ, to make the veriest babe an example for apostles; while the insufficiency and nothingness of all human reliance, the emptiness and vanity of the most plausible of human pretensions, are made manifest, in that the disciples, in the midst of the benefits of Christ's ministry, fall to disputing about a question of personal distinction, lag behind their Master, and even come into his presence and approach his person with their minds estranged, and their spirits disordered to such a degree, that a child might serve for their instructor."

Leaving his kind friends at Washington, the Bishop put himself into his new Spanish saddle,

and turned his face southward, towards San Augustin, the seat of the East Texas Conference, which he reached after a pleasant journey. The session was a protracted and laborious one, and closed on the 17th December. He stationed twenty-four preachers, and one was admitted into the travelling ministry. He had a slight attack of fever here, taken from exposure; but it quickly yielded to treatment prescribed by himself—boneset-tea and castor-oil. He was not sufficiently recovered to preach on Sunday; but performed the ordination service at his own room on Monday afternoon. The kind attentions of his hostess, Mrs. Governor Henderson, were unremitting.

The Texas Conference, held at Cedar Creek Church, December 29th to January 3d, closed his second tour of Episcopal visitations. Six preachers were admitted into the travelling connection, and thirty stationed. On the 5th January he reached Houston, preached at eleven o'clock, and the next day took steamer for Galveston. He says the next day: "My work is done, and I go home, the Globe, a noble boat, with a favorite old captain, being ready to depart for New Orleans, to-morrow morning. I have travelled since the 10th September upwards of three thousand miles—about eleven hundred on horseback; and although I have been on the road almost every day that I was not in Conference, have had no more than three wet days to ride in. While on horseback, had to ford eight rivers, and creeks I know not how many,

without experiencing the least detention or inconvenience, or even having to pass through water more than knee-deep. Goodness and mercy have attended me in all the way I have come; and in that goodness and mercy will I trust, with thanksgiving, to the end."

The Globe had a smooth run across the Gulf; and the sentiment of the beautiful was stirred in the good Bishop's soul, by the scene presented just before reaching the mouth of the Mississippi. He thus describes it: "The sunset this evening was the most gorgeous I ever gazed at. The sea was as smooth as a lake, and the dappled clouds, kindled gloriously over it, flung down upon its silvery bosom such a brightness as could not be painted. And how true to the heavenly light were the kindled waters! just as it should be where the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ has been revealed to the believer. I have now crossed the Mexican Gulf, that most dreaded part of my whole tour; and here, as along all my journey, goodness and mercy have most remarkably attended me. Great improvement in the appearance of the plantations as we go up the river: the buildings better; cultivation better; plantations larger; and last, not least, there seems to be a better chance to keep from drowning. I see some plantations, every foot of which is evidently lower than the surface of the water of this mighty, booming river, which is kept off by an embankment, of about the height of our

rice-field river-banks. The orange trees, with their tempting fruit, are the only very pretty things I see.

"Arrived at New Orleans January 13th, before one o'clock P M. Learned that the boat for Mobile would start at three o'clock. Took a cab for the post-office, and thence to the railroad leading to the Mobile boat. Got to the railroad in good time, but none too soon; and by the railroad to the steamboat, which in a quarter of an hour after set off. A most luxurious dinner of several courses, admirably served, came on at four o'clock. Such fare makes it really cheap to be carried to Mobile for five dollars.

"January 14. Notwithstanding her silly name, I am now on board of the Pride of the West. We got to Mobile at eight o'clock this morning, having been detained among the shallows in the fog some two hours during the night. I forgive the California her gaudy fixtures, and allow her also to be a noble boat. It really looks strange to me, after crossing so many rivers which were almost dry—the Brazos bridged by its ferry-boat, the Trinity not too deep to be forded, the Nueces knee-deep, and even Red river almost fordable—to see the Mississippi and Alabama rivers so full. Had the floods been in 'the West' I have been travelling through, what had become of me and my pony? Mentioning my pony calls to mind that I have never spoken of him according to his deserts. I rode him a thousand miles, over mountains not a few, without his once stumbling with me, though

he could not have been much used before I got him, being under five years old; and he was equal to the best of horses I travelled with, and, except one, decidedly superior as a traveller, both for the easiness of his action, and his progress on the road. I sold him at a word, for what he cost me, and would not have taken $30 more for him, if he had been in South Carolina. A very pleasant horse was Mac; and very lucky was I in procuring him: white, nearly every hair of him, just fifteen hands high, thin-shouldered, deep-chested, light-footed; bought and sold for sixty dollars."

A dear lover of a good horse, and a fine judge of his points, is our worthy Bishop. Let the tyro in horse-flesh, when about to buy, remember the orthodox canons just laid down: thin-shouldered, deep-chested, and light-footed.

Bishop Capers reached Montgomery on the evening of the 16th, voting the Pride of the West a good boat, and exceedingly well managed, worthy to be classed with the Globe and the California. On the 19th he reached *home:* how dear to a man of his exquisite family-feeling such a home as greeted him would naturally appear, after an absence so long and labors so intense, may be conceived more readily than described.

CHAPTER XVI.

Dr. Bascom visits South Carolina—His mind and manners—Meeting of the Bishops and Commissioners of the Church suit called by Bishop Soule—Bishop Capers's third and fourth tours of visitations.

EARLY in 1848, Francis W., eldest son of Bishop Capers, who had been for some years a professor and officer of the State Military Academy, was elected Professor of Ancient Languages and Literature in Transylvania University, of which institution Dr. Bascom was then President. In April, Dr. Bascom, who had made a tour through Alabama and Georgia, spent a week in Charleston, and attended the camp-meeting held in the vicinity of the city. This was the only visit ever made to South Carolina by that distinguished man. It is almost needless to add that his preaching made a profound sensation. An eminent legal gentleman of Charleston, after hearing this master of sacred eloquence, said that he had listened to Chalmers and Robert Hall, but was constrained to give the palm to Bascom. There was a singular interpenetration of the logical and poetic faculties in Dr. Bascom's mind. In preaching, his imagination

commonly won the lead of his logic—the poet got the mastery of the dialectician. His fervid genius delighted to vivify and incarnate its thoughts with the force and in the form of scenic representation. And in this he supposed he was carrying with him the sympathies of the general mind of the country, even though it might be at the expense of disappointing the fastidiousness of cultivated taste. The main fault, as we suppose, which a severe critical judgment would find in this inter-play of leading mental powers, is that it is liable to interfere with the unity of the sermon, and to detract somewhat from the definite final effect it is meant to have. Even a poet may have too much imagination, as was the case with Spenser. The "Fairy Queen" is a series of glittering tableaux, each the most beautiful of all scene-painting in our language and literature; but by their very brilliancy and rapid succession complicating and interfering with the thread of the story; and leaving at last something of a confused impression of the whole upon the reader's mind. While in South Carolina, Dr. Bascom received the attentions of leading gentlemen both in Charleston and Columbia—men who, in point of manners, were peers of princes. In company with them he maintained a noble and graceful ease, as though he had been dandled on the knee of affluence, and had mixed with titled society from his boyhood. This is mentioned merely to correct an impression of a different kind sought to be made since his death.

The General Conference of the Northern Methodist Episcopal Church was held in May, at Pittsburg. By this body, from the councils of which Drs. Olin, Bangs, Levings, and others of the foremost men of the Church had been excluded, the Plan of Separation adopted in 1844, by which the organization of the Southern Conferences had been authorized, was repudiated. The frivolous pretences on which this act was done, it is aside from our purpose to notice here. It became necessary, however, that immediate measures should be taken to secure the portion of the Book Concern which was the property of the Southern Church. A meeting of the Bishops and Commissioners was accordingly called by Bishop Soule, in June. They met at Louisville, Kentucky, September 6th.

Before leaving Charleston, Bishop Capers had the satisfaction of seeing his charming daughter, Emma Haslope, united in marriage to the Rev. Samuel B. Jones—a marriage, alas! crowned with but a few brief years of connubial felicity, Mrs. Jones having survived her father but a month or two. By him she was fondly loved, and was eminently worthy of a father's affection.

On the 16th of August the Bishop set off from Charleston, *en route* for Louisville. He preached at Wilmington the next night, spent Sunday in Petersburg with the family of his attached friend, D'Arcy Paul, Esq., and filled the pulpit in Wash ington Street Church. The following Sunday he passed at Pittsburg. Hoping to find his son, Pro-

fessor Capers, who had just been married to a sister of Dr. Bascom, at Lexington, he left the river at Maysville. He must, of course, be invited to preach at night. They gave him a good congregation, at least, on short notice. He was disappointed next morning, by the information that he would not be able to see his new daughter at Lexington, since "the birds were flown," Professor and Mrs. Capers having left on the day of their marriage for a bridal tour "over the hills and far away." Returning to the Ohio river, the Bishop reached Louisville in time for the meeting called by Bishop Soule, but suffering considerably from asthma. All the Bishops attended this meeting, and were in consultation with the Commissioners of the Church. The result of their deliberations was a determination to institute the necessary suits at law, as soon as practicable, for the recovery of the funds and property falling due to the Southern Church, under the contract of the Plan of Separation. It was arranged here, that Bishop Capers, after attending the Kentucky and Louisville Conferences, should, in accommodation to Bishop Paine, take the Eastern District, beginning at the Virginia Conference. Accordingly, he entered upon his third tour of visitations, attending the Kentucky Conference, at Flemingsburg. Here he had the pleasure to see his "new daughter"—the bridal tour having been shortened to allow him that satisfaction. From Flemingsburg he went to Hardinsburg, Kentucky, and held the Louisville Con-

ference. The session was harmonious and happy, and the public worship made a blessing to many.

Apprehending delay from low water in the Ohio, he went by the way of Nashville and Charleston to Elizabeth City, the seat of the Virginia Conference. This route allowed him the unexpected pleasure of four days with his family. On the 25th October, he set out for Elizabeth City, where the Virginia Conference closed a laborious but peaceful session of nine days, on the 9th November. A question having arisen in regard to the probable effect upon the case at law, if the society at Fredericksburg should be recognized as adhering to the Southern organization, and supplied with a preacher from the Virginia Conference, supposing their case not to be specifically provided for in the Plan of Separation, Bishop Capers considered it proper to submit the question to the Hon. Reverdy Johnson, one of the counsel of the Church, South. He accordingly went to Baltimore at the conclusion of the Conference, and had a satisfactory interview with Mr. Johnson. This incident illustrates the prudence and caution of the Bishop, and his fearless self-sacrifice. The weather was particularly bad, and his exposure to wet, frost, and snow, on the way to Baltimore, and thence to Danville, brought on an aggravation of the affection of the chest under which he was suffering. He, however, held the North Carolina Conference, and was kindly taken from Danville to Goldsboro, by the Rev. D. B Nicholson, very comfortably in his carriage.

The session of the South Carolina Conference was held at Spartanburg, and, for the first time, in one of the mountain districts of the State. The weather was fine, and a large number of persons attended from the surrounding country. The impression made by the Conference was fine, and a short and very pleasant session was closed with a peculiarly appropriate and impressive address from Bishop Capers.

At the Georgia Conference, he found himself so unwell as not to be able to occupy the President's chair on Friday and Saturday. A genial change in the weather, however, allowed him to attend on Sunday morning to the ordination services, after Dr. Lovick Pierce had preached a sermon very appropriate to the occasion. This session was held in Augusta; and there were twenty-three preachers admitted into the travelling connection.

The Florida Conference, which ended Bishop Capers's present route of visitations, was held at Albany, and closed on the 5th February. He was able to preside in tolerably good health. Previously to his setting out for Florida, his daughter, Sarah Ann, was married to Mr. W M. Sage, a young merchant of Charleston.

In March, he dedicated a Methodist church edifice in the town of Beaufort, South Carolina. This visit throughout was one of great satisfaction. His health was improving with the opening of spring. The air was fragrant with the perfume of the jasmine; and being accompanied in the same

carriage by two attached friends, each a good listener, the Bishop developed all his charming powers of conversation. The dedication sermon which he preached was highly appropriate to the time and circumstances. His text was the following: "For we stretch not ourselves beyond our measure, as though we reached not unto you; for we are come as far as to you also, in preaching the gospel of Christ." The town being made up principally of planters' residences, with an intelligent though not large population, divided in their religious preferences between the Episcopalian and Baptist denominations, there had been but little opening for the erection of a Methodist church, although the Methodist missionaries had been engaged for several years in preaching to the blacks on the neighboring islands. A successful effort, however, had been made to build a church, by the Rev. D. D. Cox, then in charge of the missionary work. In preaching on the text just mentioned, Bishop Capers maintained that Methodism did not seek to interfere with established religious organizations; was abhorrent of the sectarian spirit, in the offensive sense of that term; never aimed at proselytism. Nevertheless, it had a mission even in a small community where other churches were planted, inasmuch as there were always persons and families in such a community who might be reached and benefited by its peculiar instrumentalities, who had not, in point of fact, been brought into other communions. And what though this

class might not embrace many of the rich, refined, or highly-educated? It was the glory of Christ's gospel that it held a different point of view from that which worldly wisdom might have suggested, for its operations. It began at the bottom and worked upwards: the other would fain begin at the top and work downwards. The measure of Methodism stretched to all unoccupied ground; and its results, in fact, had never been confined within the mere limits of its own peculiar organization. It went for the revival and spread of spiritual religion everywhere; and many of its fruits were seen adorning the enclosures of other communions—lost, indeed, to Methodism, but that was no great matter, if they were gained to heaven in the end. These salient points were enlarged upon with a richness of illustration and a strength of appeal, in keeping with his high reputation as a preacher, and made the occasion one of great interest.

The state of the Methodist Episcopal Church South, as reported in the general minutes, published early in 1849, presented a gratifying picture of prosperity and advancement. There were in the connectional union nineteen Annual Conferences, four Bishops, one thousand four hundred and seventy-six travelling preachers, three thousand and twenty-six local preachers, and in the membership of the Church four hundred and ninety-one thousand seven hundred and eighty-six whites, and one hundred and thirty-four thousand one hundred

and fifty-three colored, and three thousand three hundred and seventy-five Indians—exhibiting an increase upon the returns of the previous year of twenty-six thousand two hundred and thirty-three. The Southern organization was surely able to take care of itself, by the blessing of God; and that the Divine blessing rested upon it was shown by its vigorous growth. Its preachers were doing *evangelical* work—not mixing themselves up with political affairs, not drawn aside from their proper vocation by schemes of *pseudo* philanthropy. Their zeal was not the fire of fanaticism, but a solemn, tender concern for the salvation of men's souls; their exclusive business was "to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ."

Bishop Capers left home on his fourth round of Episcopal visitations late in August. He reached Nashville on Saturday evening, September 1st, and preached at McKendree Church next morning. The day after, he paid a visit to Bishop Soule. He reached Louisville on the 6th, nothing injured by travelling, but rather "braced up." He attended in succession the Kentucky, Louisville, Tennessee, Memphis, Mississippi, and Alabama Conferences. The sessions were pleasant in the main; but he felt sorely the want of more preachers to supply the opening and extending fields of labor. Notwithstanding this deficiency, there was reported in five Conferences an increase of upwards of five thousand members. The following letter, written dur-

ing this tour, shows his grateful sense of a superintending Providence:

"After the manner of the most kind Providence, which has attended me along all the way of my journeying, from the beginning till now, I have threaded the dangerous navigation of the Red river, up and down, from New Orleans to Shreveport, and back again, without hurt or harm, and am now, after a smooth passage across the Lakes Ponchartrain and Bourne, at the mouth of the river below Mobile. Every boat, I was told, that had ascended the Red river this season, not excepting the one after me, lost some passengers by cholera; but my boat, and one of the worst and dirtiest I ever was on, though crowded beyond all probable excess, so that the clerk told me we had, little and big, black and white, five hundred passengers on board, had not one case. One old man died on board of asthma. I have no asthma. What is to come may well be confided to 'the will Divine;' but in all my travelling for more than forty years, by stagecoach, by railroad, by ship, and by steamboat, no accident has ever happened to hurt me, or any one else travelling with me, to this day. Verily, there is a Providence which watches over men!"

Surely he had good reason to "remember all the way which the Lord his God had led him" for forty years through the wilderness. And pleasant must the recollection have been to his mind, that

this guiding eye and sustaining hand had been over him while engaged directly and with full strength in the blessed work of his Divine Master. The past was safe! The witness was with God, and the record on high. Would he have exchanged the sublime satisfaction of such a train of reflection for all the honors and dignities which worldly success, the loftiest, the widest, could have entailed?

The foregoing letter was written a day or two before his sixtieth birthday. He had already touched the summit of his strength and vigor. The remaining five years of his life was a period of decadence: gracious and graceful to the last, but no longer the William Capers of former days! He cannot now travel at night without suffering. A long day's ride entails stiffness and soreness. The elasticity which carried him erect and buoyant over so many fields and through such great labors, loses its springs under the heavy hand of time. The eloquence which in former years so often

"Flew an eagle flight, forth and right on,"

has less daring in its pinion, less precision in its swoop and aim perhaps. His preaching, however, had the heightened charm with which veneration clothes the words of wisdom from the lips of age and long experience. A softened lustre shone from the descending sun; and the graces and virtues of religious character, tested and made illustrious by

so many years of public service, produced but the deeper impression the nearer he drew to that solemn and glorious land,

"Where life is all retouched again."

CHAPTER XVII.

General Conference at St. Louis—Fifth tour of visitations—Writes his Autobiography—Illness at Augusta—Sixth tour—Correspondence.

Bishop Capers attended the second General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, which was held at St. Louis, Missouri. The session was a brief one, cholera having made its appearance in the city, and threatening to become rapidly epidemic. Indeed, one of the members of the Georgia delegation, the Rev. Isaac Boring, fell a victim to the disease. The necessary business was gone through, however, and an additional Bishop elected and consecrated. This was Dr. Bascom, for whom Bishop Capers entertained the warmest affection, and whose distinguished career closed four months afterwards, amidst profound and universal regrets.

The plan of Episcopal visitations assigned to Bishop Capers the Holston, Tennessee, Memphis, Mississippi, and Alabama Conferences for the first year of the new quadrennial term. He attended all these Conferences, and in the discharge of the duties of his office was called on to station five

hundred and fifty preachers. The year had been one of prosperity; and particularly in the Holston, Memphis, and Tennessee Conferences very gracious revivals had taken place. The visits of the Bishop were highly appreciated.

On his return he spent some six weeks in the spring of 1851 with his daughter, Mrs. Ellison, at the Wesleyan Female College, Macon, Georgia, where he wrote the recollections of his early years found in the former part of this volume. This autobiographical sketch he describes to his daughter, Mrs. Jones, while composing it, as being "a plain narrative, in which I am chiefly concerned to set down facts, which perhaps may be interesting, at least to my children." The importance of undertaking this work had been earnestly pressed upon his attention by several of his intimate friends, who believed that his reminiscences of that period of Methodistic history in the South Carolina Conference covered by his early labors, would be a contribution to the literature of the Church of inestimable worth. He contemplated a continuation of the narrative of his life, but never added a line to what he had written at Macon.

By the kindness of the Rev. W G. E. Cunnyngham, one of the missionaries of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, to China, we are enabled to favor our readers with the following letters from Bishop Capers, the first of which was written at Macon. Mr. Cunnyngham says: "Below I send a copy of two letters written by Bishop Capers, one

addressed to Mrs. Cunnyngham, and the other to myself. It was my privilege to enjoy the friendship of that truly great and good man for several years before his death. The letter to me was written before my appointment to China, and in answer to one from me asking for advice on a subject which his letter sufficiently explains. The advice he gives may do other young preachers good. I have had cause to thank God for it. The letter to Mrs. C. exhibits some of the finest traits of his beautiful character. I send a copy, because I do not wish to give up the original letters; they are a treasure I would not readily part with.

"SHANGHAI, CHINA, May 18th, 1857."

"MACON, GA., Feb. 18, 1851.

"MY DEAR BROTHER:—Yours of the 3d inst. has been forwarded to me at this place from Charleston. As to the advice you ask, you may trust me to any length you please, that I will be sincere in giving it, as if it were to my own son; but that you may equally confide in the wisdom of the advice given, is another question. As a general rule, admitting of but few exceptions, one should never lift a foot to move anywhere without light; light enough, too, not only to see any disadvantages of the ground occupied at the time, but also of the ground to be occupied by a removal. Every one can see enough to be dissatisfied with something, perhaps much, in his position and circumstances;

and it is a misfortune to many, that they incline more to ponder the evil than to consider the good of their present position; and to anticipate the good more than foresee the evil of a proposed change. I would choose to see, before I made any change of much consequence, both that it should be advisable, and that it should be advisable *now*. And if I could not see this, I would deem it prudent to keep my mind easy as I might, without any change, and wait until a time should come for me to see more clearly. Always see your way before taking it, is no bad rule of action. Better wait for light than step forth in the dark, or even if it be not quite dark. When I was young in the ministry, I was much worried with a restless desire for change, thinking I might do more good, for some reason or other, in almost any other place than where I was; till, finding it to be a temptation, I cast it from me, and determined to take my allotment for the best, be it where it might. I cannot but suspect that in part, at least, you too are somewhat tempted. The great matter, my dear brother, is not *where* or for what persons we labor; but how much of the spirit of faith, and zeal, and humble love, we carry to our work. I do not, at present, like the idea of your changing your Conference. Nor can I say that I deem your reasons sufficient.

"You have not told me whether you are yet married or not, nor have I heard from any other quarter. What you say in your letter might apply either if married or expecting to marry. Suppose

then you are married. Your wife will be even more concerned by your removal to another Conference than you yourself. A parsonage, or boarding-house, will never be more bearable for being beyond the reach of her kin-folks and friends; but the reverse. Never fear that we will locate you, or that your friends will locate you, even should they wish you to locate, as long as you maintain the spirit of your calling. It is not friends and kindred, so much as oneself, that we need fear under a temptation. As to my dear ———, whether she *is*, or *is to be*, your wife, she is not the stuff to embarrass you in your duty; and see to it, on your part, that you suffer no restlessness of temptation to add a feather to the sufficient burdens of a travelling preacher's wife; but, on the contrary, let it be assiduously and constantly your care to have her as little troubled as possible, and as quiet and happy in her feelings as possible.

"My most affectionate and true-hearted love to all the family. May God bless them.

"Your very sincere friend,

"W. CAPERS."

TO MRS. CUNNYNGHAM.

"ASHEVILLE, N. C., Sept. 27, 1852.

"MY DEAR BETTIE:—It was kind of you to write me from New York: to think of me at that especial point of time when the images of loved ones at home, left for so long a time, and so far away, must have held a peculiar title to your recollections.

Your letter was most grateful to me; and right heartily and affectionately do I thank you for it. May God bless you abundantly, my dear good daughter, and make you a blessing and a praise to thousands, while you shall glorify Him by a life of simple faith and fruitful charity.

"Before you shall have received this letter, the pictures of imagination will have been superseded by the verities of missionary life in China; and you will have begun to do with the duties and trials of your great undertaking: duties and trials challenging patience and forbearance, without the aid of the stimulus of a great adventure and admiring friends. You are in China—a missionary in China. Yes, there you are, for the testimony of Jesus, while as yet a seemingly impracticable language makes you deaf and dumb, and you feel the pain of that most irksome of all the forms of solitude, the being alone in the midst of masses of people. You have neither companionship nor acquaintance with them, though you have left all on their account. City, country, forms of society, manners, customs, modes of life, nothing is like home, but every thing repulsively in contrast with it. And still you need not be unhappy. Jesus dwells in China; and you know the secret of his presence, and its power. Most pleasing is it to his love and goodness to satisfy with himself whatever may be lacking to you of friends and home-enjoyments. The promise is 'a hundredfold.' You will neither think nor feel as if the

absence of so much that gave zest to life in America, must necessarily make life insipid in China. Think of home as if you were at home. Think nothing of that wide, wide sea; for no matter for its countless millions of waves—it is only as a partition of your Father's house, separating one chamber from another; or like that meadow between home and your schoolroom at Abingdon. And think not of the days to come, while the present finds you as you ought to be. What is the difference between all the length of days you may pass in China, and the few hours of a day spent at school? Let them alone, and they will all soon be the same, and shall have passed away like a dream; and you shall wonder at the shortness of the time. Enjoy life by making most of what is at hand. Make an idol of nothing—not even of your husband; but, nevertheless, reckon your treasures to be treasures. I have known a time, when, to have had a wife back from the grave, I would have rejoiced to have gone for life to the remotest corner of the earth, with no other associate, friend, or neighbor, but herself alone. That, I have long since known, was idolatry, extreme selfishness, and utter folly; but, thank God, you have Jesus with you, to bless and sanctify what is yours. Be happy, then; be always happy; for you cannot in any other way better please God. Be always employed; watch against moody thoughts; take as much exercise as suits the climate; and be learning something when you

go abroad, no less than when closeted with book and teacher. But I stop a lecture which I did not intend, and which, I begin to feel, betrays my own weakness more than is becoming, and much more than may be profitable. It reads too much as if I considered you as weak—as if you had not been baptized with the Spirit of your Master, and were in danger of fainting under the cross.

"A thousand blessings be on your head, my dear Bettie, and your husband with you. May God keep you as He only can, from all evil, and make you a blessing to many. Much love to brother Cunnyngham, and to the brethren Taylor and Jenkins and their families.

"Your very sincere friend and brother,

"W CAPERS."

After having spent some three months in Macon, Bishop Capers set out to return to South Carolina. On his way to Augusta he was taken suddenly sick, but was able to reach the residence of his early and attached friend, John H. Mann, Esq., of Augusta. This was the first time he was ever seriously ill, away from home. But the house of his friend and brother, Mann, was almost the same as home to him. His family were sent for; the best medical aid in the city was at his service; the kindest and most unwearied attentions from the truest and most loving of friends, Mr. and Mrs. Mann, were given him; and by the blessing of

God and good nursing, he was carried through an attack which, under other circumstances, might have proved fatal.

On the 27th of May he wrote as follows to his daughter, Mrs. Stone: "I am still confined to my room and physic, after a month and a day of *doctoring*. My debility continues to a great degree. Not much stronger to-day than two or three weeks ago, but relieved of pain. Dr. Means, of Oxford, called on me, on his way East, and told me it must be a long time before I could recover. During all the earlier and severer part of my illness, I was more and much more than sustained by the exceeding grace and mercy of God, which was made manifest to me and for me, in Christ. I had never any fear, any doubt, and of course no sadness, nor even sorrow, though in much pain and great feebleness. I still have my mind free, and what is too much for me I give up without difficulty. May the blessed will of God be completely done in me, according to the riches of his grace in Christ Jesus. This is all that is now of any consequence or concern. My tender love to your sisters. Tell them, precious girls, that I have been very near home since I saw them: near enough to know that verily it is no fabled land, but the true, eternal kingdom of the Son of God, our Saviour, where he has prepared places for us. Tell them to live for it, and away from the world, that they may attain unto it."

By the middle of June he was able to reach Charleston, but still so feeble as to be prevented

from performing the least service whatever beyond prayer with his family. He held himself in calm and devout resignation to the Divine providence, saying, "If God will, I shall work; and if he will it rather, I shall still be of no service till I go hence." His health, however, in a week or two began to improve rapidly; and he was able to preach in Columbia on the last Sunday in June, and with unction and fervor. At the edge of the grave, he had caught a vivid glimpse of eternity, and with the full impression upon his spirit he delivered his message to dying men. After spending several weeks at Anderson Court-house, where, for the sake of the climate, he contemplated residing in future, he returned to Charleston so much recruited as to undertake his tour of visitations. He left Charleston early in August, hoping to attend most of his Conferences. The following correspondence presents an account of his movements:

"St. Louis, Mo., Sept. 12.

"To Augusta, Atlanta, and as far as Marietta, some three hundred and fifty miles, I had the company of brother and sister Shackelford, and a very pleasant time. Reached Chattanooga Thursday evening, and was presently afterwards in the stage-coach for 'over the mountains and far away.' Walked up the first mountain, Walker's Ridge, which is the steepest and very high, though not the highest, before midnight on foot, which, after such

a fatigue as travelling from Charleston to that point without rest, I thought something smart for me to do. Was willing to pass for an old man, and to be carried by the horses up the Cumberland, on the same night. Got to Nashville, still without rest, at two o'clock in the morning, Saturday. On Sunday preached twice. Monday, at about eleven o'clock, took boat for Paducah, on the route hither; and going to the boat, found Bishop and sister Soule on board, bound for Louisville. How lucky! For we were on the last boat that would be able to get down the Cumberland river, and to have missed her would have obliged me to take another hard day and night stage-route from Nashville to Paducah. I am here quite soon enough, and with a fair prospect of reaching Fayette, the seat of the Missouri Conference, by boat, as early as I wish to do. My journey hither has done me no harm, and, for the much that remains, we have only to exercise a prayerful trust in God, who is the living, ever-present God, and whose providence is faithful and unfailing, whether it seem to us prosperous or adverse."

"FAYETTE, Mo., Sept. 27.

"AT St. Louis it was my purpose to come up in a boat to a town on the Missouri river, Boonville, opposite to this place; but at the time the river was deemed too low for a certain passage in reasonable time, and Dr. Bond, of this Conference, (not of Baltimore,) kindly offered me a seat in his

buggy, and brought me all the way, stopping two days at his house at Danville, and all in due time for the Conference. We are getting on cleverly with the Conference, and have no hard cases of any kind to disturb our quiet. You will not be sorry to hear that I have been advised here, and have concluded to give up my purpose of visiting the Indian Mission Conference as impracticable, or, at least, likely to put it out of my power to visit the Arkansas Conference, which I ought by all means to do, as it has already been two successive sessions without a Bishop. As well as we can make it out, I should have to ride some three hundred and sixty or eighty miles to the Indian Mission Conference, and thence to the Arkansas Conference still farther, perhaps four hundred miles. This, in the time allowed for it, I could not do, especially over such a tract of country as, for much of the distance, I should have. I expect to return to St. Louis, and thence go to Memphis by boat, and thence to Camden, Arkansas, as may be deemed best. I continue about as well as when I left you; perhaps never again to be as strong as I have been, though but little ailing. Still, I eat pretty heartily, and sleep as well as I have been accustomed to do from home. O that I could rid myself of the feeling of exile which so constantly oppresses me in these long absences from home! Or if I might, would it not be substituted by some worse feeling? Perhaps it might; but I greatly fear that I am chargeable with performing an un-

willing service; and what ought I not to be willing to do or forego in the service of my Redeemer?"

"MEMPHIS, TENN., Oct. 22.

"I WROTE from Fayette and St. Louis, to the latter of which places I returned as I had gone, with Dr. Richard Bond, in his very comfortable buggy. If there were such pleasant prairie roads along the distance from Fayette to the seat of the Indian Mission Conference, and thence to Camden, as between St. Louis and Columbia, I should have been able to prosecute that route without doubt or difficulty. Such roads, however, extend in the direction of the Indian Territory and Arkansas no farther than Warsaw, and all the rest of the route, except a few remaining prairies, lies over the most rugged country, and directly across all the lines of travel, for full four hundred miles out of six hundred. Indeed, it appeared, from the information of brethren on whom I could rely, that Camden might be reached from Muddy Spring only on horseback, and horseback travelling was interdicted to me by the medical men. The Indian Mission Conference, therefore, had to be given up as of necessity, and the Missouri Conference passed a resolution unanimously advising it to be necessary, and for me to fall back on the rivers as the only practicable way of reaching the Arkansas Conference, where my presence was still more imperatively called for than at the Indian Mission Conference, there not having been a Bishop there for the

last two sessions. We had a very pleasant Conference at Fayette, and, I trust, a profitable one. On my part, there has been no cause of complaint; on the contrary, I have every reason to remember the brethren with grateful affection.—I arrived at Memphis on the 18th; got a horse and buggy, put them on a steamboat, and go down to Napoleon, a little town at the mouth of the Arkansas river, where I meet another boat, which goes to Pine Bluff, within seventy miles of Camden, and having a ridge country of pine land lying between them, crossed by only one small river. One of the brethren here, perhaps Dr. Ebbert, will accompany me. We start to-morrow. At St. Louis I preached twice on the 12th; here, last Sunday, but once; but I make up for it by having preached in one of the churches last evening, and being to preach in the other this evening. I perceive no particular difference in my health since leaving home, but only find that I am much more easily fatigued than formerly, and cannot endure much. Rough roads are my particular aversion, and travelling over them does me no good. I think I have ended my stage-travelling by night, unless, perhaps, between Augusta and Anderson. But what are rough roads with you, are smooth west of the Mississippi, (or, indeed, east of it in this quarter,) except the Missiouri prairies in dry weather. The utmost I expect to attempt is to go to the East Texas Conference, at Henderson, Russ county; and if the experiment between Pine Bluff and Camden should not

ırgue favorably, and the information to be got at Camden be favorable also, as to the route thence to Henderson, I shall not go farther than the Arkansas Conference."

The following letter is to his eldest son, who had shortly before connected himself with the Church:

"CAMDEN, ARK., Nov. 17, 1851.

"MY DEAR FRANK:—I had hoped to get a letter from you at this place, but have not been favored with one. Yet I have received one from your mother, which has given me no little pleasure on your account, by the information it communicates of your having joined the Church. I consider this a great matter, and rejoice for it, notwithstanding the inadequacy of Church-membership, or any other circumstantial or conventional thing, to answer the necessities of the soul; because it puts you in the way of God's institution, and therefore a hopeful way, for the obtaining of all your wants—pardon, peace, and the power of grace. God be with you, my dear son. And he will be with you, as sure as he has been with me. 'The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children.' 'Thou hast avouched the Lord, this day, to be thy God, and to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and to hearken unto his voice. And the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people, as he hath promised thee.'"

"I need offer you no advices, nor give you any cautions, for you well know that to be hearty and diligent in duty, doing it to please God, and because he has appointed it, and expecting to be accepted, not for the sake of the deed done, but for Christ's sake, whose grace consecrates your obedience that it may be approved—this and this only, being God's method of saving you through his blessed Son, will keep you in the hour of temptation, and carry you through whatever may come, by the supply of the Spirit of grace, safely and surely to the end. Christian duty is never to be neglected, and is never a thing by itself; but done unto the Lord, its every act is a sacrament of grace, an opportunity of meeting with Jesus, and obtaining his blessing. Nor may the duty be unblest because it may not at the time be attended with any sensible comfort. No, nor though, instead of the comfort of joyful emotions, it should seem rather to be an occasion of discomfort. (See Gen. xv. 12.) We must needs be variously exercised that we may know our dependence on 'the blood of sprinkling' to be entire, and to admit of no substitution, at all times. You will now more especially consider life in its true substantiality; not as a thing of fancy, a painted show, but the field of moral, intelligent, responsible action, in which every man is to perform his part among his fellows, and before God, for all eternity. Not as if they were feathers in the wind, where the lightest might fly highest, but men with souls in their

bodies, conscious of immortality, and using time to purpose. Give my love, my tenderest love to Han and the boys. God be with you and bless you, my dear son.

"Your affectionate father,

"W. CAPERS."

The following, to Mrs. Capers, is dated New Orleans, November 28, 1851:

"The Conference at Camden adjourned on Tuesday evening, the 11th inst. And what from my bruised condition by the roughness of the road to that place, and the close application required by my duties at Conference, I was quite ailing, so that I did not leave Camden till the Monday afternoon after the adjournment, not feeling able to encounter the road, even to return home. This decided me to sell the horse and buggy I had bought at Memphis, for I thought I could not in any reasonable time expect to travel so long a journey as was before me, even over better roads, by that conveyance. Reserving the use of this conveyance to take me to the Mississippi river, I set out, as above, with brother Hunter, who accompanied me as far as St. Bartholomew Bayou, (creek,) in the Mississippi swamp, where was a ferry but no boat, the flat having been broken and being under repair. Here I dismissed him with the horse and buggy, to return to Camden, one hundred miles, and put myself under the care of a most estimable Christian gentleman by the name of McDermot, for the rest

of the way to the great river, it being only eighteen miles. Passed a pleasant half day with this friend in need, and was sent by him, well attended, to the river. Passed Sunday there, at nothing, and Monday morning got passage on the steamer St. Paul, of St. Louis, for New Orleans, where, after a pleasant trip of six hundred miles, I arrived last evening. The steamboat seems to be the very thing for me, where I get exercise enough without effort, and can lie, sit, or walk at pleasure; and during this trip I have been recruiting fast, instead of suffering as by my late journeys over bad roads. But what has chiefly and decidedly contributed to my better condition in the last ten days, is the use of Jew David's plaster to the small of my back. Without this, I doubt if I could have sustained the ride from Camden, Arkansas, to the Mississippi river; whereas, with it, I was enabled to do so with much less pain than in the ride to Camden, and nothing like the same degree of exhaustion.

"I remain here until December 1st, and shall then pursue the ordinary public route, resting on the way, and probably calling on Anna for a day or two. Hope to get home in time for Christmas."

CHAPTER XVIII.

The Methodist itinerant system—Its suitableness to the expanding population of the country—Statistics—Seventh tour of visitations.

THE thoughtful reader cannot fail to be impressed by the long separations, the perilous and protracted journeyings, the wearing thought, in addition to constant preaching, involved in stationing preachers and providing supplies for the spiritual wants of large portions of the country, which, in the system of itinerant clerical operations in the Methodist Episcopal Church, fall in full stress upon her Episcopal staff. To one accustomed to the quietude and regularity of the home-parish system, this might seem to be, very much, a needless expenditure of muscle and brain, of men and means. Such things, it might be thought, were very well for the beginning of the present century, and for the times of Francis Asbury; but surely at the present day the mission of Methodism might be supposed to lie mainly in the pleasant work of the spiritual edification of the multitudes of disciples already gathered into its fold. There is, no doubt, work enough of this sort. But it is forgotten that while

ten years ago the Western frontier line of this country moved onward at the average rate of thirteen miles a year, bearing the ensigns of civilization into regions covered with primeval forests, wildernesses untrodden save by the wild beast, or the scarce less wild Indian, now the advancing lines of march rush forward with no fixed rule of progression, made up of columns supplied by foreign immigration, reaching in some instances to a half million of souls a year. Think of the ignorance, prejudices, vices, that must belong to myriads of these Eastern hordes! They are, nevertheless, henceforth to be part of the American people. Our free institutions are to mould them, or to be overthrown by them. The Mormon rebellion is the first instalment of possible future trouble. The statesman grapples with the gigantic problem of the future *status* of the republic, and investigates the conditions under which it becomes possible that this heterogeneous mass may be brought up to the right position for self-government. The Christian asks himself, What moral and religious resources are at command, to leaven this mighty aggregation of souls with the principles of spiritual religion? Shall the westward march of the nation be signalized by churches and schoolhouses, as the milestones of its grand progression? and the amenities, and domestic charities, and intellectual trophies of a Christian civilization, bloom and blossom in the late wilderness of nature? And if so, how is this consummation so devoutly wished

for by the lover of his country to be accomplished? The answer is, it must be brought about, under God's blessing, to a great extent by the peculiar genius of the Methodist itinerancy. The preacher of the gospel, and by eminence the Methodist preacher, is destined to bear a conspicuous and glorious part in this achievement. This must be so from the fact that the Methodist itinerancy furnishes the trained discipline, the almost military economy, the rapid combinations, and central efficiency of a system of camp-meetings, circuits, Presiding Elders' districts, and Annual Conference organizations—the simplicity, directness, and vigor of evangelic aggression; and the oversight of a general Episcopal superintendency, directing, encouraging, animating the whole apparatus of men and measures, and pushing the missionary column in the direction claimed by the strongest emergency. Here are Bishops who, to the sagacity, wisdom, and veneration obtained from years of service, add the vigor of hardy pioneers who ride on horseback a thousand miles on a stretch, along the frontier of civilized life. It has been said of the Methodism of fifty years ago, that "it had no ruffles or lawn sleeves that it cared to soil, no lovelocks that it feared to disorder, no buckles it was loth to tarnish. It lodged roughly, and it fared scantily. It tramped up muddy ridges, it swam or forded rivers to the waist; it slept on leaves or raw deer-skin, and pillowed its head on saddle-bags; it bivouacked among wolves or Indians; now it

suffered from ticks or mosquitoes—it was attacked by dogs, it was hooted, and it was pelted—*but it throve.*" Yes, it throve; it grew like the mountain oak, in dark weather, dandled by stormy winds. Manifestly, it was the very thing for the time and country, fifty years ago. The physical conditions are not quite so hard now; but the system still has exactions sufficient to test and call out the heroic in the temper and spirit of the men who work it. Obviously, the adaptation of such a missionary organization to present circumstances is no less signal than it was to the circumstances of a half century since. The salient point of its doctrinal system is the principle that redemption by Christ is general, and that, consequently, Christianity is a universal remedy for the sin and woe of the world. In the spirit of this leading principle of its theology, all its arrangements look to a constantly progressive movement for evangelizing the country, the breadth of the North American continent being the base of its operations, and new enterprises the soul of its itinerancy. Personal inconveniences sink out of sight in the presence of great principles of action, such as these. In the grandeur of a purpose so vast and comprehensive, so many-sided, touching the interests of society at such vital points, Bishop Capers might well have wished himself young again, that he might give another life in supreme devotion to the one sublime work of preaching "the unsearchable riches of Christ," from the centre to the outposts of civilized life.

The General Minutes giving the statistics of the Southern Methodist Church for 1851, exhibited a gratifying amount of progress. There were then in the connectional union twenty Annual Conferences, exclusive of the Pacific Mission Conference. The total of membership amounted to five hundred and twenty-nine thousand three hundred and ninety-four. Adding travelling preachers, one thousand six hundred and fifty-nine, and local preachers, four thousand and thirty-six, there was a grand total of five hundred and thirty-five thousand and eighty-nine, showing an increase of fourteen thousand seven hundred and ninety-three for the last ecclesiastical year. The average yearly increase from the beginning of the Southern organization had been twelve thousand. At this period it appeared that a Methodist journal, somewhere, had admitted that at *one* locality the Church seemed to be on the wane. The intelligence called out something like a genuine *Jubilate* in the newspapers of some neighboring denominations, which amplified the affair into a *general* decline. The demonstration was a trifle premature. The Minutes showed, indeed, that Methodism was going down—but going down the right way, spreading its roots to support a wider spread of its branches.

In September, 1852, Bishop Capers left home to commence his next tour of visitations with the Holston Conference. The accession of sixteen preachers to the effective list of the "Switzerland" Conference, made the eyes of the good Bishop

sparkle. Holston had already a representative in China—the Rev. W G. E. Cunnyngham, a man of most admirable qualifications for that mission; the Conference at the present session nominated another of its preachers for a distant mission-field, California; and Bishop Capers had the satisfaction to appoint him. The session was protracted; yet he was able, in addition to presiding regularly, to preach several times, and to ordain, at one service, both deacons and elders.

Before reaching the seat of the Holston Conference, he visited the Echota Indian Mission, in the Asheville District. There is a remnant of the Cherokee Indians, about twelve or fourteen hundred in number, who were settled on lands in Jackson, Macon, and Cherokee counties, North Carolina, at the time when the tribe of Cherokees were removed to the West. To this remnant the Holston Conference has sent missionaries from the time of the Cherokee exodus. When Bishop Capers visited them, there were about one hundred and fifty Church members, and three or four Indian preachers, among them. An English school, taught by the Rev. U. Keener, was in successful operation. The Bishop spent several days in the Mission, preached to the Indians once or twice, with Charlie Hornbuckle as interpreter, and was highly gratified at the improvement which these Cherokees had made in agriculture; and especially with their improvement in all social and religious respects. He felt and manifested a special interest

in them, and opened a correspondence in respect to their affairs, with the Rev. William Hicks, then Presiding Elder of the district.

He spent Sunday, the 17th October, in Charleston, *en route* to Fredericksburg, the seat of the Virginia Conference, and preached twice with his usual ability and unction, leaving the next day in the Wilmington steamer. At Fredericksburg, ten preachers were admitted into the travelling connection, and one reädmitted. The Bishop presided to the satisfaction of all parties, and stood up well under the toils of the session. In the Conference-room, in the social circle, and in the pulpit, he was ready, affable, and effective; and left a fine influence on the Conference and community. In a letter to Mrs. Capers he says: "We had a delightful Conference at Fredericksburg; one of the very best in all respects. At Petersburg, I stopped Saturday and Sunday with brother and sister Paul, the latter having attended the Conference at Fredericksburg. Sister Paul has renewed her old-time kindness, and I have in my trunk, silk and calico, and pocket-handkerchiefs. 'I have,' said she, 'a quantity of envelopes, and I want you to take a parcel of them.' I thanked her, and took them; but in one of them I found twenty-five dollars, directed to me. This, I suppose, was in lieu of a coat she had intended to give me, and which I declined, as not needing one at present."

Mrs. Paul must pardon us for publishing the

foregoing. If the incident shows the admirable womanly tact with which she has long been accustomed to do her acts of kindness to the preachers, why, that is known to thousands, and she has found it impossible to conceal entirely things of this sort, notwithstanding all her efforts. The Bishop accepted gratefully the pocket-handkerchiefs and the like; but when a coat in addition must be received, his delicacy prompted him to decline, lest he should seem to be availing himself, beyond proper bounds, of the kind partiality of his lady friend. But wouldn't he accept a parcel of envelopes?—he had a large correspondence—a fresh supply of envelopes would not burden his portfolio. O good, easy Bishop! fairly caught. There is your new coat, nicely stuffed away in one of these smooth-faced envelopes, which told no tale at the time. Let sister Paul have it her own way, henceforth. She is entitled to the queenly luxury of doing good.

After attending the North Carolina Conference at Louisburg, which closed November 10, and spending a few days at home with his family, Bishop Capers set out for the Alabama Conference. This was held at Marion; and on his way, he spent a Sunday at Selma, preaching morning and afternoon—at the latter service, to the blacks. At this session, the notable number of twenty-eight preachers were admitted into the travelling connection. The Bishop conducted the business of

the Conference to the entire satisfaction of all concerned; and his pulpit labors were specially edifying, appropriate, and eloquent.

The session of the Georgia Conference began in the beautiful town of Athens, December 15th, and closed on the evening of the following Tuesday. By general admission, it was considered one of the pleasantest ever held in the State. A large amount of business was gotten through with dispatch, and the venerable Bishop carried a face of sunshine. Upwards of one hundred and sixty preachers were stationed.

On the 5th January, 1853, Bishop Capers took the chair, and opened the session of the South Carolina Conference at Sumterville. This was also a very pleasant Conference. Among other things noticed at the time, there was a donation made to the superannuated preachers' fund, by Andrew Wallace, Esq., of Columbia, of a thousand dollars, so conditioned as to have the interest paid annually to Bishop Capers, and his wife, during their lifetime—a touching testimonial to the worth and public services of the Bishop, on the part of one who had long known him.

The Florida Conference closed the present round of visitations. It was held in the town of Quincy, beginning January 26th. As if he had renewed his youth, Bishop Capers presided in the Conference, held his consultations with the Presiding Elders, preached and performed the ordination services on Sunday morning. When the afternoon

service was over, finding that his friend, Dr. Summers, who had been appointed to preach at night, was complaining of sore-throat, he insisted upon taking his place in the pulpit; would listen to no demurs on the Doctor's part, and went and preached with power and effect; and closed the day's sacred work by administering the Lord's Supper.

At this Conference he made the two following decisions:

"It has been desired that I should express my opinion, *ex cathedra*, with respect to a question which has recently given trouble in one of our stations: whether it is allowable for a member of the Church, a leader or steward, to preach without license of the Quarterly Conference.

"The Discipline appropriating to the Quarterly Conference the authority to license proper persons to preach, and requiring that their licenses should be renewed yearly, clearly implies that persons believing it to be their duty ought to apply to the Quarterly Conference for license. This is the orderly and proper way for any one to become a Methodist preacher. But the present question looks to something short of this; as in case the person concerned, without believing himself to be called to preach, as a profession, should think it his duty sometimes, in the absence of a preacher, to hold religious services with his neighbors and brethren, as a preacher might do. The question is, whether this ought to be allowed? I know nothing against it if the person be of fair Christian char-

acter, his teaching accord to sound words, and he competent to teach. On the other hand, I should commend such a person for his labor of love, and encourage him to do all the good he could. There can be no imposition in it, nor a bad example, as if one who might be a vagrant should assume to be a preacher. Nor do I judge that at the present time, and in this Conference District, there is any occasion to set a guard on the zeal of intelligent and worthy members of our Church, as if there were danger of their encroaching on the ministry. I would rather say, with Moses, Would that all the Lord's people were prophets!

"W CAPERS.

"CONFERENCE AT QUINCY, Jan. 29, 1853.

"The following questions have been put, in Conference, for my decision from the chair:

"1. Has a preacher in charge a right to withhold a certificate of membership, simply because the applicant desires to attach himself to a society more remote from his place of residence than the one from which he desires to be dismissed?

"2. What relation does a person sustain to the Church who holds in his possession a certificate of membership? If regarded as a member, to what society is he accountable?

"3. When a member has been found guilty of gross immoralities, can he upon manifesting penitence and promising reformation be retained in full connection in the Church?

"To the first of these questions I answer in the negative. And I add, that the certificate of membership is due independently of any suspicion or aversion of the preacher, on the naked ground of

freedom on the part of the applicant from any Church censure, or objections formally made involving censure. A certificate that one has been an acceptable member at any place, intends no more than membership unimpeached, at that place. But I have known one to ask in writing for a certificate, in such language as should of itself be sufficient to subject the applicant to censure. In which case the preacher should instantly go to the offending brother, and seek to correct the wrong, as the Discipline requires; or, in default of this, he having virtually waived the offence by his own indifference, might not make it a reason for withholding a certificate.

"To the second question, I answer, that the person holding a certificate of membership is a member of the Church by virtue of that certificate, for such length of time as the circumstances of the case and the analogy of our economy may warrant. And during this time, (that is, while the certificate avails him for membership, and before it has been presented elsewhere,) he is amenable to the society to which he belonged at the time it was given him. If he is a member at all, he must be amenable somewhere, and he can be amenable nowhere else.

"To the third question, I answer in the negative. It was a frequent practice with our fathers, in cases where penitence was strongly marked, to put the offender back on trial for six months; placing him in relation to the Church as if he were just begin-

ning. But it requires great strictness and extreme caution to make this practice safe or expedient. Penitence is an easy price for pardon, or for even a mitigation of punishment; and probably it has been for this reason that the practice has been discontinued. The immoral person had better be expelled; and if he be truly penitent for his sin, he will make it appear, and return to the Church by joining on trial, as at first. There has been more than one Judah, to whom the *shame* has been more abhorrent than the *guilt* of a transgression.

"W CAPERS.

"CONFERENCE AT QUINCY, Jan. 31, 1853."

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CHAPTER XIX.

Eighth tour of Episcopal visitations—Failing health—General Conference at Columbus, Georgia—Last tour—Illness and death.

AFTER a few months of relaxation at home, Bishop Capers, accompanied by his wife, set out to attend the Western Virginia Conference, held at Clarksburg, August 24th. Thence he went to Louisville, Kentucky, where a meeting of the Bishops and Missionary Board was held, September 7th. Bishop Soule had not long before returned from California. The account which he gave of his visit to the Pacific Conference was deeply interesting. In reference to the missionary work in general, Bishop Soule said, "The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, ought to raise five hundred thousand dollars a year for missions: they are able to do it: *it would be a great blessing to the donors.*"

From Louisville Bishop Capers went to Versailles, where he held the Kentucky Conference, commencing September 14th. Then followed the Louisville Conference at Owensburg, Kentucky, which closed its session October 4th; the Tennessee Conference at Franklin, and the Mississippi

Conference at Canton, commencing November 23d. By this time the Bishop's health began to fail perceptibly, so that he was not able to attend the session of the Louisiana Conference, the last of his present tour of visitations. The company of Mrs. Capers with him was of great service and satisfaction.

At home once more, the quiet and relief from public cares and responsibilities brought his health up again to a tolerably comfortable state. As the spring opened, his passion for gardening had full scope; and the exercise in the open air and sunshine, which he took in laying off and improving the grounds of his up-country residence, was evidently beneficial. He was able to attend the General Conference in May, though he excused himself, on account of the feebleness of his voice, from occupying the President's chair during almost the whole session. In the plan of Episcopal visitations, there were allotted him, in view of the uncertainties of his health, only the Georgia and Florida Conferences for the ensuing winter, and a visit to the negro missions in South Carolina for the spring of 1855.

In November he passed several days at Columbia, during the session of the South Carolina Conference, under the Presidency of Bishop Pierce. He was able to preach once on Sunday. A serene cheerfulness characterized all his social intercourse with the brethren with whom he had formerly been so closely associated, and before whom he had ever held up a bright example of devotion to the cause

of the itinerant ministry. They saw him now for the last time among them!

On the 13th December he opened the session of the Georgia Conference, at Atlanta. Dr. Myers said of his Sunday's sermon, that he had rarely ever heard him preach better: his discourse was pervaded with that holy unction which carried it to the heart. Although the labor of presiding at so large a body as the Georgia Conference was of course severe, yet the Bishop went through with an energy which surprised his friends. Having to leave Atlanta before day, at the close of this session, and the weather being very cold, he suffered somewhat from bronchial irritation; but so far recovered as to be able to preside at the Florida Conference at Madison, early in January, with satisfaction. This Conference closed his public labors on earth.

On his return homeward from Florida, he visited Charleston. His friend, the Rev. Dr. Myers, who enjoyed the satisfaction of passing with him the last evening of his stay, at the residence of his son, Major F. W. Capers, describes the interview in the following words: "Much of the evening was spent in conversation respecting his last Conference. He expressed the liveliest interest in the Church in Florida, and earnest desire for its prosperity, believing, as he said, that the importance of this section, and its wants and worth, were underrated by the preachers generally. He expressed some disappointment at not having received, from an officer of the Conference, some information necessary

to the completion of the Conference minutes for publication, as he wished, as always heretofore, to forward these minutes to the publishers as soon as he reached home. When he was told that the information desired had reached the office of the Southern Christian Advocate that afternoon, and could be obtained from the next week's paper, he remarked: 'But, brother, it may be too late.' And it was; for before he could have received it, he was upon his death-bed. He had met some members of his family whom he did not expect to see in Charleston, and he remarked it with special satisfaction, saying that he rarely saw so many of his children together, there being six of the ten present. They parted that night to meet next on the resurrection morn."

Taking the railroad to Columbia on the next morning, he spent the night of January 23d with his old friend, the Rev. Nicholas Talley, and reached home the next day. On the following day, January 25th, he completed his sixty-fifth year, and at midnight the final attack came. His two daughters were awakened by their mother calling to them in great alarm; and hastening to the Bishop's room, they found him sitting up, but suffering great agony. "Make my blood circulate," he said; and warm flannels, friction, and mustard were applied in vain. An icy coldness had seized the extremities. Seeing alarm depicted in the countenances of those around him, he said: "I am

already cold; and now, my precious children, give me up to God. O that more of you were here! but I bless God that I have so lately seen you all." Then turning to his daughter Mary, he said: "I want you to finish my minutes to-morrow, and send them off." The preparation of those minutes was the last official act of his life; and it is touching to observe how his habits of promptness, punctuality, and order were manifested at a crisis so solemn. "Duty was his law in life—his watchword at the gates of death." A physician was soon with him, and succeeded during the next paroxysm of pain in producing nausea, and temporary relief, and he was removed to his bed. He then asked the hour; and when the information was given, he said: "What, only three hours since I have been suffering such torture! Only three hours! What, then, must be the voice of the bird that cries, 'Eternity! eternity?' Three hours have taken away all *but my religion!*"

During the next day he suffered much, but was constantly engaged in prayer—especially for his family. On Sunday he was better, and sat up nearly all day, and at night insisted that his children should not sit up with him. But his son-in-law, the Rev. S. B. Jones, who had come from his circuit, and Mrs. Capers, remained with him until after midnight. On Monday morning at daylight Mr. Jones approached his bedside, saying, "How do you feel this morning, father?" His answer

was, "I feel decidedly better, and would like to get up, that your mother may be able to sleep." Mr. Jones then said: "The doctor wishes you to take a small dose of castor oil." "Well," said he, "give it to me in a table-spoon, for I have no taste." Being assisted to raise himself, he took the spoon, drank the oil, then took a tumbler of water and rinsed his mouth over a basin. Mrs. Capers turned from the bed to put aside the tumbler and basin, and in a moment he breathed his last. His countenance expressed the utmost composure; no single sigh or convulsive movement marked the approach of death. Gently as dies the latest whisper of summer winds, his life passed away. Thus quickly had disease of the heart done its fatal office. Mrs. Capers could not believe that this was death. She thought it must be only a fainting fit, and that she should again see the light of those dear eyes, and once more hear the voice of her beloved husband. She applied all the restoratives within reach; and continued for nearly an hour the hopeless endeavor to recover him to consciousness. But the pleadings of affection fell on "the cold, dull ear of death;" the immortal spirit had joined the innumerable company before the throne.

As soon as the intelligence of the death of Dr. Capers was received at Columbia, a meeting of the ministers and members of the Methodist Episcopal Church was held, and resolutions appropriate to the

solemn event were passed, together with an earnest request to the family of the deceased Bishop, that his remains should be removed to that city for interment; to which the consent of the family was given. In Charleston, also, meetings were held in the several Methodist churches, and resolutions of affectionate respect for the memory of the deceased, and of condolence with his family, were adopted, accompanied with a request similar to that of the Methodist community in Columbia, it being their wish that the remains of the Bishop should lie beneath the altar of Bethel Church.

On the 2d of February, the corpse, accompanied with a funeral procession, was taken to the railroad dépôt at Anderson; at Cokesbury the funeral train was joined by a committee appointed to represent the Church there on the solemn occasion; and at Columbia, on the arrival of the cars at half-past four o'clock P. M., a committee of ministers and laymen received the body, and conveyed it to the residence of the Rev. Nicholas Talley. On the next day, at ten o'clock A. M., it was taken to the Washington Street Church, the Rev. Messrs. Shand and Wigfall, of the Protestant Episcopal Church, the Rev. Drs. Leland and Howe and Frazer, of the Presbyterian Church, the Rev. Messrs. Boyce and Curtis, of the Baptist Church, and the Rev. Messrs. Crook, Gamewell, and Townsend, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, acting as pall-bearers. The service at the church was conducted by the Rev.

Whiteford Smith, D. D., who preached a sermon highly appropriate to the occasion, from Acts xiii. 36: "For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep." After the last hymn, and a final look at the calm, beautiful face of the dead by weeping friends, the body was removed to the grave in the rear of the church, where the burial service was read by the Rev. Mr. Talley, and the coffin was lowered to its place, dust to dust, and ashes to ashes, until the resurrection at the last day.

The death of Bishop Capers made a profound impression throughout the Southern Methodist Church, in all parts of which he was personally known and respected. Church meetings and Quarterly Conferences, by scores, recognized the loss sustained by the Connection, and adopted resolutions of sympathy and condolence with the bereaved family. Many funeral sermons were preached, as tributes to his memory; and of these, one by Bishop Pierce at Nashville, and another by Dr. Cross at Charleston, were published: both of them beautiful and eloquent memorials of the worth of the deceased Bishop.

Over his grave is an oblong structure of granite covered by a marble slab, in the centre of which rests a pedestal supporting an obelisk of Italian marble. This bears the following inscriptions.

On the west side:

WILLIAM CAPERS,
Born in
St. Thomas' Parish,
South Carolina,
On the 26th Jan., 1790,
And died in Anderson,
South Carolina,
On the 29th Jan., 1855.

On the south side:

One
Of the
Bishops of the
Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

On the east side:

The Founder
Of Missions
To the Slaves in
South Carolina.

On the north side:

Erected
To the
Memory of
The Deceased,
By the
South Carolina
Conference.

In the Washington Street Church, a tablet of white marble bears the following inscription:

THE REV. WILLIAM CAPERS, D.D.
This Monument
Is erected by the Congregation of this Church
In memory of
The Rev. William Capers, D.D.,
One of the Bishops of
The Methodist Episcopal Church, South,
Who was born in St. Thomas' Parish, S. C.,
January 26th, 1790,
And died near Anderson C. H., S. C.,
January 29th, 1855,
Having served his own generation by the
Will of God, in the Christian Ministry,
Forty-six years.
His mortal remains repose near this church,
The corner-stone of which he laid
During his ministry in this town
In 1831.
He was the Founder of the
Missions to the slaves
On the plantations of the Southern States.
To shining abilities
Which rendered him universally popular
As a Preacher,
He united great simplicity and
Purity of character.
"The righteous shall be in everlasting
Remembrance."

CHAPTER XX.

The *personnel* of Bishop Capers—Intellectual character—Conversational powers—Religious experience—Style of Preaching—Theology of the John Wesley school—Administrative capacity—Family feelings—Belief in a special Providence—Disinterestedness—Results of his ministry.

BISHOP CAPERS was of medium height, well formed, and a little inclined to corpulency in the advance of life. At middle age his hair, which was thin, began to fall off, and left him bald. This, however, only made his appearance more touchingly venerable, during the last ten years of his life. His face was fine, and its expression that of blended intelligence and amiability. His eye was black and lustrous; it indicated great vivacity of temperament; and seemed gifted with the power of reading human character at a glance. His hands were small, with the fingers tapering, and the nails closely pared. The teeth were perfect; the lips thin, and indicating decision; the bust round and full; and the voice clear in its ring, and melodious as a chime of bells. Thus nature had given him the necessary *physique* for an orator.

His manners were those of an accomplished

gentleman. The ease and affability, the finish and freedom from professional crotchets, which characterized his deportment, arose from his native kindness of heart, his careful early training, and the large knowledge of the world to which his calling had naturally led.

Dignity of person, and the various elements which make up weight of character, were added to an intellect distinguished for its keenness, vigor, and readiness. His mind was well balanced, practical, and solid; awake to the sentiment of the beautiful; and fitted by culture to appreciate and enjoy this sentiment in nature and in man. Delicacy, however, rather than majesty, fancy more than imagination, prevailed in his intellectual constitution.

His powers of conversation were remarkably fine. He loved to talk; and in talking shone without effort. A genial spirit of humor, racy without coarseness; an unborrowed fund of anecdote; a vein of deep reflection; all ready to be laid under contribution for the instruction and entertainment of those who listened, made his society very charming. The exquisite symmetry and versatility of the man came out here, as well as in every other department of his well-balanced character.

His experience of Divine things was genuine and deep. Christianity, with him, was no mere theory, to be subjected to scientific and critical research, to be matter of speculation, and system, and con-

fined mainly to the intellect; nor was it a church formalism, standing in a goodly round of ritual observances. Least of all was it a poetic sentimentalism, the mere play-impulse of the susceptibility to the beautiful and the good. On the contrary, it was a divine life to his soul, a heavenly renewal of the spirit by the power of the Holy Ghost, as well as a conscious acceptance with God, through the atoning sacrifice of the Divine Son. It was communion with the Father of spirits, and a constant realization of the powers of the world to come, along with the irrevocable commitment of intellect, emotion, and will to eternal rectitude. In all the manifold conditions of social life, he maintained the delicacy and dignity of a lofty virtue never subjected to suspicion, never stained by the slightest shade of moral laxity.

His piety was nurtured by the daily habit of private prayer. Here he found the strength and realized the vigor of the religious principle. His communion with God was ever through the mediation of Christ. His way to the holiest was ever by the blood of Jesus; his boldness of access, through the unchangeable priesthood; his closet a precinct of Calvary—a cleft of the sacrificial hill. He was wont to measure the extent of all gracious attainments in the soul of a Christian, very much by the extent to which personal, private prayer has the force of a vital principle—the fixedness of a habit. And if he laid this down in his preaching, as a test of religious character and attainment, his

own life was strictly conformed to the standard. To this habit of private prayer may be traced the prevailing spirituality, humility, and tenderness which imbued his ministry. Equipped and armed with the panoply of the pulpit warrior—"cincture and breastplate, and greave and buckler, and helmet and sword," his efficiency, after all, came as the result of his "praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit."

His public prayers bore the impress of the private devotional fervor. They were eminently spiritual, comprehensive, and edifying: as far removed from any affected magniloquence of words as from stiff formality or solemn dulness. Here, too, it was observable how the expiation of the cross formed the great plea, was urged as the sole reason for the bestowment of the Divine mercy and grace. This gave scope and compass to his petitions; winged the words of intercession; warmed the holy fervor of thanksgiving; and sent up his voice to heaven in the acclamation of adoring praise—"Worthy is the Lamb."

His preaching was always and strictly extemporaneous, as distinguished from manuscript reading, and *memoriter* preparation. He never used notes of any kind; and probably never, in the whole course of his ministry, drew up a half-dozen outlines. It by no means follows from this, that he did not make his discourses matter of deep and concentrated reflection, before their delivery. This he unquestionably did. But his preparation con-

cerned itself principally with the substance, very remotely with the form, probably never with the mere verbiage of the sermon. His ordinary practice discarded divisions and subdivisions altogether. His method of treatment was peculiarly *his own;* elaborated from some salient point in the subject; bound into unity by the subtile affinities of thought developing thought; and leaving fresh and distinct upon the mind of the listener the impression of some leading truth or duty. A very special fluency in utterance, the intuitive perception of the right words, ease of movement, refinement and elegance of manner, and a chaste and finished delivery, characterized his preaching. Occasionally he fell below his usual level of vigorous thought; but even then, the commonplaces of the pulpit, delivered by his eloquent voice, charmed the popular ear. Sometimes he rose above that level, and then the intellectualist was struck with the freshness and affluence of his ideas, with the force which vitalized his conceptions. In his ordinary preaching, a flash of unexpected light would frequently be thrown upon some important point in the discussion; the latent power or beauty of a word would be brought out; and you would be reminded of the saying of one of the old writers: "I will honor sacred eloquence in her plain trim; but I wish to meet her in her graceful jewels; not that they give addition to her goodness, but that she is more persuasive in working on the soul she meets with." His ministry was no mere function for doling out crumbs and

milk for babes; it furnished the instruction and presented the means and motives by which Christian men could be strengthened, advanced, and matured in holiness, and fitted for the duties and exigences of life. The well-understood word *unction*, describes the prevailing cast of his preaching during the last decade of his ministry. It is the vital warmth from heaven, the anointing of the Holy Ghost, producing a tenderness which yearns over the souls of men, a gush and flow of sympathy, throbbing at the preacher's heart, and welling from eye and tone, and coming fast and faster in irrepressible desire for the salvation of souls for whom Christ died.

It need scarcely be added, that Bishop Capers was, in his theological opinions, thoroughly Arminian, using that word in the sense of the John Wesley school. This by no means interfered with the play of a truly catholic spirit on his part. He felt how many ties of common sentiment unite those who "hold the Head." And he was ever ready to bid God-speed to all who sincerely labor to spread Christ's kingdom among men. While, therefore, his preaching was never controversial, at the same time it embodied and kept constantly in view those great elements of gospel truth which are embraced by the Church to which he was attached. To these he gave the cordial and full assent of his mind. He gave utterance to what he considered no doubtful speculations when he declared the freeness and fulness of Christ's atoning

sacrifice; a general redemption; the free agency and moral accountability of man, and the sincere offer, to all, of grace in the gospel proclamation. He held the essentially simple and grand Methodistic point of view: justification by faith alone, to all who feel their guilt and danger; faith, a personal trust in Christ, as a sacrifice and a Saviour; the promise of God, sufficiently free to warrant an application to Christ for present salvation; the witness of pardon by the Spirit of God, the common privilege of believers; and this comforting assurance maintained by the lively exercise of the same faith which justifies the soul. These were the doctrinal rudiments which the preaching of Dr. Capers illustrated and expanded in ample variety, richness, and beauty. An Evangelist, with a commission as wide as half a continent, our good Bishop everywhere proclaimed this gospel.

His reverence for revealed truth was sincere and profound. The speculative faculty in his mental constitution was held in unquestioning submission to the "mind of the Spirit" as presented in the book of God. Where the heavenly illumination stopped, he stopped. He felt no wish to overstep the limits which separate the known from the unknown. That Christianity was from heaven he had had the most irrefragable of proofs: he had *tried* it, and found it Divine. The great substance and body of truth revealed in Holy Scripture was clearly perceived and firmly embraced, and fur-

nished him the largest materials for his work as a preacher. The person and character and life of Jesus—what an inexhaustible mine did he find there! With what delight was he accustomed to dwell upon the scenes and events of the evangelic narrative! What frequent and forcible lessons were furnished him in the parables of our Lord! Subjects of this kind, under his masterly handling, were, indeed, many-sided, and fraught with perennial interest. One in the habit of hearing him often, was apt to be struck with the predominance of the experimental and practical over the imaginative, in his preaching. Among the themes of the pulpit, there are some which belong to the loftiest walks of human thought in the region of the transcendental. An ineffable grandeur invests them. Their innate majesty kindles the imagination. Skilfully presented, they touch the soul with deepest awe and admiration. The human spirit stands uncovered in the presence of a glory so dread and supernal. But the class of susceptibilities meant to be chiefly affected by the gospel, lies in another direction. Man's great business with the gospel is to find a Saviour there. The main questions every sermon should propose to answer are, How may sin be pardoned? how may its power be broken, its pollution removed? how may the new obedience which springs from loyal love to God in Christ be achieved? how may the principle of holiness be strengthened and rendered dominant in the soul? Questions like these are of the

deepest import to the soul awake to its real moral condition, its tremendous destiny in the life to come. The solemn function and office of Christian preaching was ordained to meet these. And whatever splendor of native endowment, whatever breadth of learning, or quickness of insight, or power of dramatic representation the preacher may possess, all of real vitality and significance which belongs to these qualities of mind is found in their concentration upon the grand simplicities of the gospel; in their being made tributary to one sublime end, the salvation of men for whom the Son of God became incarnate and died upon the cross.

In administrative ability in the episcopal office, Bishop Capers was not remarkable, though he held a respectable rank with colleagues who are justly regarded as eminent in this department of ecclesiastical service. He never made parliamentary rules matter of special study, and was inclined, in the early part of his administration, rather to ignore them in favor of primitive usage, when he presided in an Annual Conference. A larger experience corrected this view; and his second quadrennial term showed a constantly growing improvement. His general course was marked with dignity and courtesy; and if at any time he became for a moment fretful, it might be set down to the effect of bad health on a temperament peculiarly nervous. His addresses to candidates for membership in the Conferences, and at the reading out of the appoint-

ments, were always solemn and appropriate; in many instances, highly felicitous. In the stationing-room he always sought and was open to the judgment and counsel of the Presiding Elders; never exhibiting any consciousness of superior sagacity — least of all any exercise of arbitrary power; but, earnestly imploring the Divine guidance, and availing himself of the best lights accessible, he discharged the eminently delicate duty of making out the appointments. While presiding at one of the sessions of the Georgia Conference, an embarrassment arose in the stationing-room, in regard to the appointment of one of the preachers. Things were left at a dead-lock, when the Presiding Elders retired. The next morning, Bishop Capers took occasion, without mentioning names or particulars, to say to the Conference that Providential guidance was very much needed in a case which, the night before, had greatly perplexed his advisers and himself; and that having entire confidence in the efficacy of prayer to secure the light and aid from God which were wanted, in a matter that concerned his cause and kingdom on earth, the earnest and special prayers of the Conference were asked, in order that they might be rightly directed in the present instance. The incident illustrates his prevailing tone of thought and feeling, in the discharge of the weighty responsibilities of his office.

It is hardly necessary to say, that he regarded the Episcopate in the Methodist Church as a func-

tion of government and ministration, an order *jure ecclesiastico*, conferred by election and ordination, and not a Divine-right prerogative of a falsely called *priesthood*. As he thoroughly eliminated from his views of the Christian ministry the priestly element, he had no possible use for the *priestly virtue*, supposed to be mysteriously conveyed in the so-called Apostolical Succession, and claimed by the Romanists as necessary to the validity of ministerial acts. In this view of priestcraft, which is the essence of Popery, he agreed with the great body of Protestant Christians.

Bishop Capers was a man of strong family feelings. No one could enjoy *home* more than he. But for the last fifteen years of his life, we have seen how perpetually he was called to endure long periods of separation from his family. We have seen, also, how paramount was the principle of *duty* with him. When the time to set off for an appointment came, he broke away resolutely from the charmed circle, holding every personal feeling in abeyance. In one of his letters from Texas, he says to Mrs. Capers: "The most trying time of the whole period of a long absence from home, is that which comes when, business fully done, there is nothing remaining but to return. I find it will not answer to dwell in anticipation at all; but the best I can do is to occupy my thoughts with the kindness of Providence in the past, and so school myself down to patience as an exercise of gratitude.

In Missouri, in the Indian Territory, in Arkansas, I would indulge, and often did, in reveries of home, without restlessness, and even with entire composure; but then, there was much time to pass, and much of my duty to be performed, before I might set my face homeward; and the communion of home stood more in recollection than anticipation. Time before me held out a Conference or Conferences to attend, weighty responsibilities to be met, holy duties to be performed, before home might be enjoyed; and these I would never pass or skip; but they stood ever before me, thank God, not as the cherubim, with a fiery sword, but rather as covenant pledges of fidelity to my Lord, which I should love to redeem, before I might think of coming in from the field, and sitting down to meat. We are poor creatures, unprofitable servants, after all."

Few parents are to be found, fonder of their children than he. In his letters when absent from home, he always sends kisses to each of them. He often wrote to them. The following are specimens of his correspondence with them. To his youngest daughter, at that time just learning to read, he sends the following gem:

"MY VERY DEAR LITTLE DAUGHTER MARY:—When Pa thought he would send the lines in a letter from Memphis to Emma, his next thought was, what he should send to his little Mary; and then he sat down and wrote these:

And what shall Mary be,
If Emma is the Rose?
For Mary—let me see—
What flower of flowers grows?

It must be very sweet,
And very pretty too;
A flower right hard to beat,
I hold to Mary due.

The *Rose* to Emma's given;
To Mary, *all the rest;*
And let them both send up to heaven
A perfume ever blessed.

Be a dear, sweet child, and keep Ma pleased all the time till I come home again. Tell brothers Henry and Ellison to be good boys, and never forget their prayers. God bless you, my dear little daughter.

"Your affectionate father,

"W CAPERS.

"MAY 21, 1841."

To his youngest son, Theodotus, then a lad just old enough to be sent off from home to the Cokesbury School, he writes, August 7, 1853:

"MY DEAR SON:—When we parted, on your first experiment of being from home at a boarding-school, I dare say we both felt more than we were disposed to have known. It was owing to sheer absence (whatever may have been the cause of that absence) that I did not put into your hand a little money. I send you your first purse, to be disbursed according to your own discretion, in the form of two five-dollar bills; and with the advice that, for your

own satisfaction in future, more than my own, you will keep regular memoranda of how you expend every fourpence of it. Begin with your beginning in this way, and if you continue the same practice through life, it will be all the better for you. May God bless you, my dear boy. I have high hope of you; and confident of your self-respect and readiness to improve your time to better purpose than youthful fun and frolic. I shall be sadly disappointed if I do not hear the best account of you, if it shall please God to keep me, as hitherto, through the journeys of the residue of the year. Never be cast down. Be assured that a worthy and valuable life can hardly be possible without no little of the severities of trial and self-denial, which you, like every other person, must feel to be painful in the experience of them. Use your time, keep your conscience tender, fear God, and grow to be an honor and a blessing."

In a preceding page the death of the Bishop's daughter, Mrs. Jones, has been mentioned. His daughter Anna, who was married to the Rev. Dr. Ellison, a gentleman of high worth, died in 1857, in the joyful hope of eternal life. Dr. Capers's youngest daughter, Mary, is the wife of Professor Stevens, of the South Carolina Military Academy. His son Henry Dickson is a practicing physician at Auburn, Alabama, with fine prospects of distinction in his profession, and has been married to the daughter of Dr. A. Means, of Oxford, Georgia.

His next son, Ellison, is expected to enter the ministry in the South Carolina Conference; and the youngest son, Theodotus, is at present a student matriculated at Wofford College. The Bishop's domestic relations were exceedingly happy; and while his children revere the memory of such a father, they bid fair to be an honor to his name.

Trust in God was a strong, practical principle with Bishop Capers. He was a firm believer in the Christian doctrine of a special Providence. He saw distinctly the proper medium between the enthusiastic extreme, on the one hand, of expecting miraculous interpositions, and the rationalistic extreme, on the other, of shutting up the Divine agency in fixed laws and an uninterrupted, necessitated order in the sequences of nature. He saw how the Absolute, the great Author of natural laws, could, without disturbing the settled order of the physical world, leave himself, in the multitude of *contingencies* at his disposal, ample room for the exercise of a fatherly care over those who put their trust in him. How often had he realized the fact that fervent prayer brought actual spiritual influence upon the soul! If God, as free Personality, absolved from any chain of nature's effects and causes, could come thus nigh to his creatures in the manifestations of his grace, without miracle, and in full accordance with the principles and laws of his august administration, why should it be doubted that he is both able and willing to make all outward things tributary to our real well-being? and

that, too, without suspending or interrupting the course of nature. A thing is said to be accidental; not that it happened without an adequate cause, but that we know not why the cause of its happening should have come into operation just then. But the Divine agency pervading the whole life of things, can and does arrange, in the complications of natural phenomena, these accidental things, so that they touch us and affect us, just at the right time and in the right way to answer the Divine purpose.

John Fletcher—a name illustrious in the great Methodistic movement—had entered the military service of Portugal, when a young man, and was on the eve of embarking for Brazil, when a servant *accidentally* overturned a kettle of boiling water on his leg. He was left behind on the sick-list. This trifling so-called accident was in the hand of a special Providence the instrument of a change in his whole destiny. After his recovery, he sought active service in Holland; but peace was declared, and he passed into England, where he was converted to God, and became one of the leaders in the great revival of the eighteenth century. What thoughtful, religious man can review the events of his own life without perceiving and noting how often the most important movements in his life-history turned on the centres of seemingly small fortuitous events? The disposing of these fortuities he will, with adoring gratitude, refer to the special providence of his Heavenly Father, whose eyes are

"over the righteous, and his ears open unto their prayers." A profound philosophic insight, no less than an humble piety, can blend in the harmony of a higher unity the sequences of nature and the interpositions of a particular Providence. And thus, trust in God, so far from being a blind impulse, rises into the force of an intelligent and mighty principle, holding us firm amid life's chances and changes; giving nurture to the highest forms of virtue and piety; training the soul to the exercise of the noblest qualities demanded by the purpose of life; and bringing unfailing happiness in the train of habitual holiness.

This circle of thought is susceptible of a wider expansion. St. Paul has a remarkable passage in his Epistle to the Ephesians: "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God." The scheme of Providence runs through the whole intention of the institution of the Church, and through the whole history of her varied fortunes. The spectators of this majestic, all-penetrating movement, are not merely contemporaneous nations, during the march of the ages, but celestial beings of highest rank, and, it may be, diversified points of abode, in the universe. These heavenly intelligences are attracted to the earthly theatre of the developments of the scheme of redemption, as to the point of view at which "the manifold wisdom of God" displays its most luminous illustrations, and its most profound adap-

tations. Wisdom, and not mere power, is the attribute most signally disclosed—wisdom, in the nice poise maintained between the effective energy of Divine influence and the self-active spontaneity of the human will—wisdom, in the adjustment of heavenly grace to the law of individual responsibility—wisdom, in the provision of a sufficient remedy for moral evil in the sacrifice of the Divine Son, and the condition upon which alone this remedy is efficaciously applied, faith in his blood; wisdom, in fine, manifold wisdom, in superintending the movements of this profoundly balanced scheme, in the world; working into the Divine plan, and making tributary to its ultimate success, all national vicissitude, all human culture, all conflicts of thought; using subordinate agencies, and making even the wrath of man to praise God. The progress of Christianity seems to be subjected to the common conditions of human things: errors, defections, strifes, are not shut out by Divine power; millions of the human race are yet unevangelized; ages of persecution, ages of darkness, ages of conflict—these are the epitome of Christian story. And yet the heavenly watchers have been contemplating in every one of the evolutions of this sublime cause, in its ebb no less than in the swell of its mighty flood, the manifold wisdom of God. In their magnificent sweep of vision they have seen this attribute manifested in instances innumerable, in forms as illustrious as diversified; and they anticipate with serene confidence the final issue. How

honored is that man who is permitted, under such inspection, to bring the activities of a large intellect and firm will and brave heart, assisted by the Divine grace, to the service of such a cause! Surely the sleepless eye of a special Providence must follow the steps of such a man.

The disinterestedness of Bishop Capers, in a public life crowded with active labors, and reaching through near a half century, is worthy of note. There are Bishops whose annual income is fifty thousand dollars. There have been Bishops who amassed splendid fortunes from the emoluments of their office: one leaving a half million of dollars to his family at his death; another a million and a half—"non-preaching prelates," many of them, in addition. Bishop Capers, it need not be said, belonged not to this class of Church dignitaries. All he ever received from the Church he served so long and faithfully, was a bare subsistence; eked out, withal, by the sale of his patrimonial property. Once or twice his personal friends relieved him from the embarrassment of pressing debts; a life-estate was given him and Mrs. Capers in a residence in Charleston, partly by a donation from the South Carolina Conference, and partly by contributions from his friends; and occasionally some kind-hearted "sister Paul" would, in spite of his delicacy, make him a present of a coat. But the care of a large family; the expenses of living, and of perpetual removals; the hospitalities which his breeding, natural temper, and circumstances ne-

cessitated, involved an outlay of money which kept him worried with petty pecuniary obligations. He carried often a burden of spirit which it demanded the firmest religious principle to sustain with equanimity. "One thing only might I desire," he said in a communication to his brethren of the South Carolina Conference in 1849, "if it were God's will, concerning all the cares, business, and bustle of life; and that is, to wipe my hands clean of it all now and for ever. But this might not be. I have a wife and children, and may not be indifferent to temporal things. But my concern about such things ever has been, and ever shall be, limited strictly and entirely by the wants of life in those dependent on me. For myself, I have no wants, and know no care." In the last interview but one which the writer of the present memoir had with him, Bishop Capers invited him to step into an adjoining room, and, with a countenance beaming with satisfaction, said: "I have a bit of intelligence for your private ear, which I know will please you: I am about free from pecuniary embarrassment at last." He then gave a brief detail of the position of his affairs, in a tone tremulous with the excitement of gratitude to God for his deliverance from annoyances of that class. And yet, this was a man whom popularity had followed for more than forty years; whose talents, address, and tried character, if directed to any of the walks of secular professional life, would have insured him ample property; to whom tempting offers had

actually been made to induce a change in his denominational relations. His disinterested attachment to the itinerant Methodist ministry was proof against all assaults from without, all fears from within. It stirs the sentiment of the moral sublime to see a man of eminent abilities, world-wide reputation, and charming social qualities, consecrated by the grace of God to one work in life—that of doing good to his fellows; adhering to that work with a constancy which no toil can weary, no discouragements appall, no illusions beguile, no temptations allure; who, with serene purpose, with "the prophetic eye of faith and the fearless heart of love," unbought by gain, loyal to the last, pursues the loftiest aim of life, the glory of God and usefulness to his fellows—secures the greatest good, the favor of God for ever.

In contemplating the results of such a life as that of William Capers, we must not overlook the important and vast benefits to society, in an ethical point of view, which of necessity flow from it. The Christian preacher is an embassador for Christ. He proclaims the word of God, the gospel of salvation. He is no mere lecturer on theology, sociology, or any other science. His words are clothed with the authority of his office; and he testifies to all men, "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." He reasons of "righteousness, temperance, and a judgment to come." But then, just so far as he is successful in turning men from sin to holiness, to that extent he is making

good citizens. The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, set up in the soul, brings with it the law of moral restraint, curbs selfishness, expels dishonesty, enthrones conscience as a ruling power, gives root and sap to virtue, invests the marriage relation with sanctity; and into the family, which in many vital respects is the foundation of the State, introduces the nurture and discipline that best prepares for the grave duties of life. The whole authority of this office of preaching is enforced by the retributions of the world to come. Now, it is undeniable that the best guaranty for public freedom is found in the spread of a social virtue based on such principles. The strongest antagonist to public corruption is the manly valor in the bosom of the private citizen, which resists and treads down, by the aid of God's grace in Christ, the corruption in the heart: the selfish pride, ambition, and licentiousness which, unchecked, would flow out in conflict with the rights of others, and put in peril every thing precious in a well-ordered state of society. It is beyond the reach of human calculation, of course, to estimate the full value to society, to republican institutions, of the direct and indirect influence of the ministerial function, kept true to its lofty and spiritual ends. But it is abundantly obvious, that a faithful minister of Christ, who directs his labors to the great ends of his heavenly commission, becomes one of the best benefactors to his country. Every such preacher, as it has been well said, does more

to guard the interests of social life than five magistrates, armed with penal statutes, and more than five hundred visionary philosophers, with the best theories of the perfectibility of man. Dr. Capers held himself fixedly aloof from all parties and politics; never attended public dinners, or made after-dinner speeches; did not even so much as vote at public elections—not to talk of desecrating the pulpit to the vile ends of political demagogueism. Near the close of the General Conference of 1844, when the eyes of the whole country were fixed upon the proceedings in the case of Bishop Andrew, Mr. Calhoun addressed a note to Dr. Capers, inviting him to stop at Washington City on his way home, and favor him with a personal interview in respect to the probable course of the Southern Conferences. Dr. Capers thought it best to decline the invitation, lest it should be said, as indeed it was afterward shamelessly and repeatedly said in the Northern and North-western papers of the Church, that the politicians and preachers were in council. To Cæsar let the things of Cæsar belong, was his maxim. Yet, in his own sphere and proper vocation, how nobly he served his country the foregoing considerations will show. From this point of view, his life would be the record of a potent instrumentality in the moral triumphs and social progress of his time and nation. With all the emphasis of truth was it said over his coffined remains, that he "served his generation."

The direct spiritual good accomplished by the

ministry of such a man, can be fully known only at the revelation of the great day. If the award of that day shall be, "Well done, *good* and *faithful* servant," it will be enough. It were a success for the faithful minister of Christ, beyond all the laurelled prizes of earth, to save his own soul. But success in his ministry did largely crown the labors of Bishop Capers. Many were the seals God gave to his honored servant; much the fruit which followed his exertions. The persons brought under serious concern—brought to repentance and faith in Christ—under a single address of his, were numbered by scores. The whole course of his ministry tended to the edification of the Church. And in the midst of this Church he stood as a shining pillar, covered with trophies of victory.

He has left behind him no literary monument, save the Autobiography prefixed to this memoir, the Catechisms for the negro missions, and Short Sermons and True Tales for children, written for the Sunday School Visitor, and since his death published in a neat little volume, by Dr. Summers. He was formed in the vigorous school of active life, and the incessant travel and constant preaching of his earlier years left him no time for the severer studies which are necessary to successful authorship in the fields of theology, metaphysics, or moral science. This early contact with the practical realities of life, while it fostered the energy by which he forced his way to eminence and usefulness, was unpropitious to scholarly habits. He had the

elements of a great PREACHER in him. Preaching was to be his work for life. It was to him, it is to any man, the noblest of all possible vocations. In the sphere of great labors which he filled in the Methodist Church, from his twentieth to his thirty-fifth year, the special need was for men of ready, keen, vigorous *action*, of eloquent, influential *speech*. That he should be a cloistered student, and at the same time a man of the people, a man of action, an orator, and a leader in affairs, was not to be looked for. However rapid in his mental combinations, and original and vigorous in his grasp of thought, there are other qualifications for authorship which he well knew his circumstances had not allowed him to develop. Nor did any ambition of the sort trouble him. His proper sphere of service he filled wisely, judiciously, successfully. He was one of the master-spirits of the second generation of Southern Methodists; a worthy successor of Asbury, Hull, Humphries, and Daugherty; intrepid, whole-hearted, well-poised, strong in influence that had been nobly won by great labors; a doer of things worthy to be written; inheriting a dignity unapproached by him who has merely written things worthy to be read. Having applied the activities of life to the loftiest uses, he has passed into the City of God, where, in the domain of spirits for ever blessed and glorified, those activities will ever move on,

> "While life, and thought, and being last,
> Or immortality endures."